Commentary
September 2004

World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have to Win

Norman Podhoretz

Were American Indians the Victims of Genocide?

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The Einsteins of Wall Street

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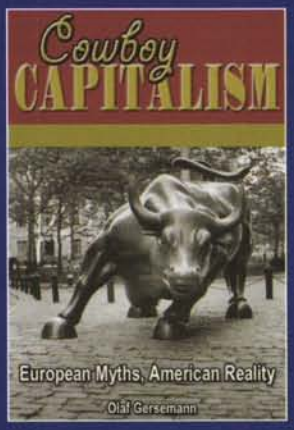

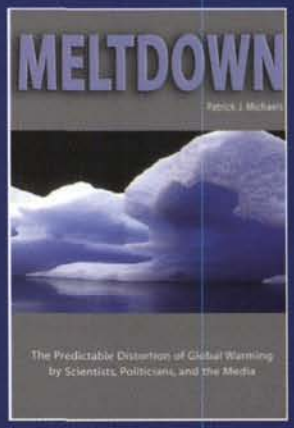

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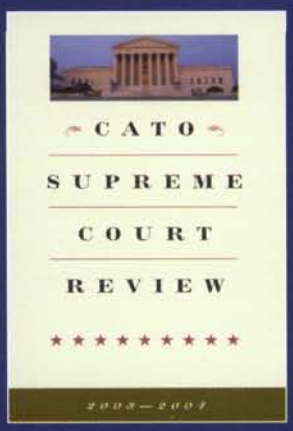

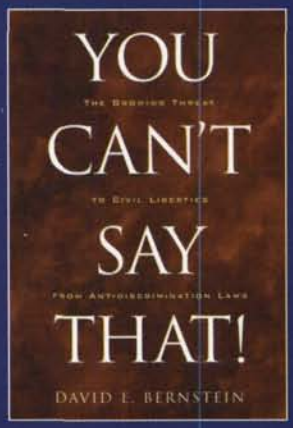

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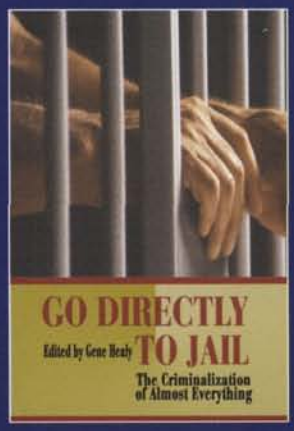

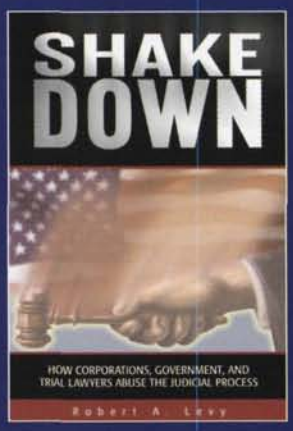

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ARTICLES

17
World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have to Win *Norman Podhoretz*
The United States is once again locked in a struggle with a deadly global enemy. Herewith a critical, comprehensive guide to the history, the stakes, and the maddeningly complicated politics, foreign and domestic.

55
Were American Indians the Victims of Genocide? *Guenter Lewy*
With the opening of a new national museum, the evidence begs to be examined afresh.

64
The Einsteins of Wall Street *Jeremy Bernstein*
How the financial markets can be made to obey the laws of physics. Or can they?

71
I.B. Singer and Me *Terry Teachout*
The great Yiddish writer offers a profound tutorial in the harsh consolations of humor.

76
The Axman Cometh *Joseph Epstein*
There is an art to destroying literary reputations; mastering it takes more than mere talent.

ART

80
Modigliani à la Mode *Steven C. Munson*
A captivating painter has been reduced to the sterile categories of identity politics.

LETTERS

3
The Passion; Islam; art under pressure.

BOOKS

85 My Life by Bill Clinton *David Frum*
88 The Missing Peace by Dennis Ross *Hillel Halkin*
92 Freethinkers by Susan Jacoby *Gary Rosen*
95 Colossus by Niall Ferguson *Sean McMeekin*
98 Freedom Just Around the Corner by Walter A. McDougall *James Nuechterlein*

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Letters from Readers

"The Passion"

To the Editor:

David Berger's article on Mel Gibson's movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, is both analytically brilliant and dialogically sensitive ["Jews, Christians, and *The Passion*," May]. Still, I have a comment or two from the Catholic side of the sanctuary.

Mr. Berger rejects Rabbi Michael Cook's unnuanced view that the handling of *The Passion* by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) amounted to a "betrayal of decades of Catholic-Jewish dialogue." I would underscore the significance of this. As Mr. Berger rightly notes, many of those praising the movie have also strongly condemned the notion that the Jews can be considered collectively guilty for the death of Jesus. In this country, Catholic bishops and scholars commenting on the film in the Catholic media cited both the Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate* and the Conference's own "Criteria for the Evaluation of Dramatizations of the Passion." Readers of Catholic journals and newspapers would have had these issues freshly in their minds because of the internal Catholic publicity blitz given to *The Bible, the Jews, and the Death of Jesus*, a 110-page volume of official statements over the years from the Holy See and the USCCB designed to implement the conclusions of the Second Vatican Council and to guide Catholics in the correct theological and historical understanding of the Gospel passion narratives.

As Mr. Berger also points out, before the Second Vatican Council, Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus would have been presumed. Passion plays in the past—and the movie is certainly a traditional passion play, in both its artistic strengths and its historical/biblical weaknesses—did indeed trigger anti-Semitic violence. But the historical context has changed. The ancient "trigger," if you will, was pulled, but the "gun" of the collective-guilt canard has been so thoroughly dismantled in so much of the Christian community that the weapon could not discharge.

I would argue that the review of *The Passion* by the USCCB, like the Gospel narratives themselves, must be understood in historical context. Despite the film's flaws in its portrayal of Jews and Judaism, I did not believe that, by itself, it would foster anti-Semitism in anyone who was not already anti-Semitic, and I believe that the record has shown me to be right. It is hardly a "betrayal," as Rabbi Cook would have it, to have judged that the movie would not lead to anti-Semitic violence in the U.S., which in fact it did not.

This does not mean that we in the Church can relax our vigilance. The USCCB's "Criteria" are set even more firmly now (and are much better known, thanks to all the publicity) as guidelines for Catholic productions of the passion. But anti-Semitism is a pernicious disease, and has the ability to change with the times. As the Holy See's 1988 document, *The Church and Racism*, noted, "anti-Zionism—which is not of the same order [as anti-Semitism], since it questions the State of Israel and its policies—serves at times as a screen for anti-Semitism, feeding on it and leading to it."

Finally, while Mr. Berger considers Mel Gibson to be an "unreconstructed" or "traditional" Catholic, he might be interested to learn that Cardinal Roger Mahoney, who as bishop of the diocese in which Gibson resides has an authoritative opinion on the matter, does not consider Gibson to be any kind of Catholic at all, since he has publicly rejected the papal and conciliar teaching authority of the Church.

Eugene J. Fisher
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
Washington, D.C.

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TO THE EDITOR:

There are some things in David Berger's analysis of the controversy surrounding *The Passion of the Christ* that I would quarrel with, but what matters most to me about discussion of this issue is tone: Mr. Berger's is sober, reflective, and genuinely moving. His article stands in stark relief to those activists, pundits, and movie critics who have made many reckless and insulting remarks about the movie, Mel Gibson, and Christianity.

The day the movie opened (I had already seen it twice, both times with Gibson), I went to a Manhattan theater with a group that included Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, executive vice president of the New York Board of Rabbis; Father Philip Eichner, chairman of the board of directors of the Catholic League; and several other rabbis and priests. At the press conference that followed, everyone had a chance to speak. There was much disagreement. But there was also amity.

Mr. Berger ends his piece by calling on all sides to maintain the "reservoirs of good will that have been painstakingly accumulated in the last generation." If I had to make a wager, I would bet that the good relationship that has been built between Catholics and Jews will not dissipate. And that is because there are too many good guys like Rabbi Potasnik to let that happen, and too many Catholics like myself who will not have it any other way.

WILLIAM A. DONOHUE
Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Since I helped to convene the scholars' committee that evaluated *The Passion* for the USCCB, and often found myself in the news coverage of the controversy surrounding it, I eagerly read David Berger's article. After the media frenzy, it was refreshing to have his trenchant analysis of the film and the cultural storm surrounding it.

Mr. Berger is correct to insist on the danger of Jews telling Christians what to believe or how to interpret Christian Scripture. Aside from its theological insensitivity, the practice has a boomerang effect: it provides license for Christians to tread on Jewish sacred soil and to tell Jews what *they* should believe. But the scholars on the committee—at least we four Jewish scholars—never told Christians what to believe. Mel Gibson promoted himself as a Catholic believer, and we asked him to recognize that the images, theology, and biblical interpretations in his film violated declarations of the Second Vatican Council, Catholic magisterial teachings, and the USCCB's guidelines for dramatizations of the passion narrative.

If we had a fault, it was our naiveté. Gibson soon made it apparent that he cared little for Church teachings or authority. As for the USCCB, we urged it and other Church leaders to publicize effectively their own tenets rejecting Jewish culpability for deicide and any passion dramatizations that defame Jews. Here, too, our faith proved naive.

I find Mr. Berger too charitable—perhaps a compliment to him. He guardedly concludes that Gibson's assault on Jews is not the result of intentional anti-Jewish malice because Gibson included touches like identifying as a Jew the sympathetic figure of Simon the Cyrene and a flashback to the Sermon on the Mount in which some of Jesus' followers are wearing prayer shawls. (One keen reviewer observed that after almost two hours of relentless violence, these "touches" had an impact roughly equivalent to a beer commercial during the Super Bowl.) I have a different explanation for these elements.

The scholars of the review committee learned early on that Gibson's film was not about historical accuracy, theological discipline, or scriptural integrity. It was about profit, and controversy was the most effective way to feed the box office. Hence Gibson's statement, "I want to kill [the *New York Times* columnist] Frank Rich"; the manipulation of the pope to hawk the R-rated film; the threat to sue the USCCB; and the in-again-out-again games regarding inclusion in the film of the blood curse of Matthew 27:25 ("His blood be on us and on our children")—all morally vulgar, but excellent grist for the publicity mill.

Gibson's savvy marketing team knew that the film's supporters needed some evidence, however flimsy, to make their case. Without the seemingly pro-Jewish snippets cited by Mr. Berger, there would have been no post-release controversy. They provided some degree of deniability. But there is simply too much classic anti-Semitic content in *The Passion*—sinister conspiracies, devil imagery, blood lust, inhumane caricatures, not-so-subtle worship of money—to discount systematically anti-Semitic motives.

Mr. Berger is on target to insist that the damage to Jewish-Christian relations has been great and, yet, that the dialogue must not falter. The full measure of anti-Semitic fallout from the film will not be known for years to come, but Jews involved today in Jewish-Catholic relations feel a deep sense of disillusionment. A number of individual Catholics and Protestants understood the moral gravity of the problem and fought the battle heroically, but the U.S. bishops were absent when we most needed them. As Mr. Berger recognizes, if there is any hope of a future brighter than our bleak and violent past, there is no other option than ecumenical understanding and cooperation.

RABBI EUGENE KORN
Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

In his admirable condensation of nearly twelve months of contemporary religious drama, David Berger mistakenly identifies me as "the most outspoken and uncompromising Jewish apologist for [Mel] Gibson." Outspoken—perhaps. Uncompromising—well, maybe sometimes. But an apologist for Gibson? That is simply not true.

In my own writing and in media interviews, I have not defended Gibson or his movie—which I consider not entertainment but a piece of religious instruction made by a Christian for Christians—and I have discouraged Jews from seeing it. But I have consistently criticized both the wisdom and the morality of the Jewish organizations that, for the better part of a year, hysterically attacked both the man and his movie. As Mr. Berger correctly notes, many Christians viewed these assaults as be-

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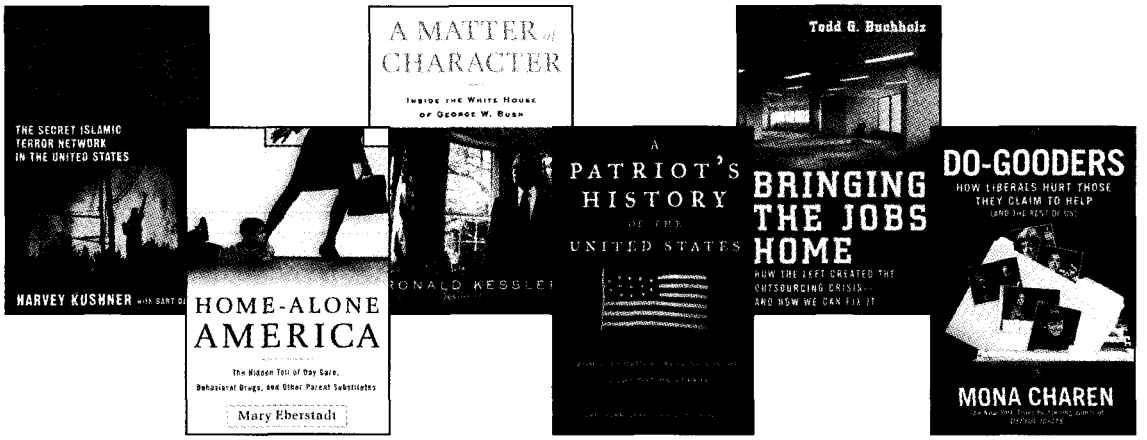
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ing directed not against Gibson but against Christianity itself. Intent on furthering their own agendas, and indifferent to the peril they precipitate, these organizations relentlessly stir up anti-Christianism.

Why? Some historical accounts of the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem report that Jewish zealots burned the city's food supplies in order to weaken the population's endurance and make war with the Romans inevitable. Their heirs today jeopardize Jewish life in America by destroying what Mr. Berger calls the "reservoirs of good will" that have sustained mutually respectful relations between American Jews and Christians.

Publishing Mr. Berger's article was a valuable service to the Jewish community. His dispassionate analysis of the entire episode warns how some Jewish leaders are converting us from a community with shared philosophical and religious values into a xenophobic tribe deriving its identity chiefly from hating others.

RABBI DANIEL LAPIN
Toward Tradition
Mercer Island, Washington

TO THE EDITOR:

David Berger is justifiably concerned about the state of Jewish-Christian relations, but he ends up downplaying the damage done in the controversy over *The Passion* by (mostly) left-leaning Jews.

It is noteworthy that Christians did not consider *The Passion* to be anti-Semitic and that Christian sentiment toward Jews, according to a reliable poll, remained positive on balance after the film. Day after day on television and in the press, Americans witnessed one Christian after another praising the film for its inspiration while one Jew after another disparaged the movie and predicted anti-Semitic violence.

Mr. Berger wants amity to prevail and lectures both sides without stating clearly that Jewish hysteria created the discord over the movie. His "ecumenical vineyards" are nice, but a fair reading of this chapter in Jewish-Christian relations may record that it was Jews who loudly booed an inspiring Christian film, indulging their irrational fears instead of being polite and saying nothing.

DAVID N. FRIEDMAN
Bethesda, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

David Berger states his preference, as a Jew, not to tell Christians what to believe about their own religion, but he does not abide by this preference. Indeed, not only does he criticize Mel Gibson's approach to Christian Scripture, but he entangles himself in a contradiction. On the one hand, he enumerates nine instances (by my count) in which *The Passion* departs from the Gospel narratives. On the other hand, he writes (quoting in part from one of his earlier articles):

> I do not regard alleged faithfulness to the Gospel narratives as a valid defense of a decision to present those narratives without elaboration or nuance. . . . Gibson and his defenders imagine that the film's adherence to the words of the Gospels with nothing added provides their most effective defense. In fact, along with the sadism and gore, it is precisely what justifies severe indictment.

These are obvious instances of telling Christians what to believe. Moreover, Mr. Berger does not seem to realize that Gibson's departures from the Gospel narratives *are* his "elaboration" and "nuance." It may be that Gibson's elaboration and nuance are conceived by him as literal readings, but that is often the case in scriptural interpretation: new meanings are understood as "unfolding" or "unpacking" what is already inherent in the text, or as simply what the text really says or means.

Is Mr. Berger, then, left with no choice but to refrain from any criticism of Gibson? Does the noninterventionist position dictate the extreme lengths to which some Orthodox Jews take it? I think not. My solution is to modify the theological preference not to tell others what to believe by adding a nontheological proviso: *provided your beliefs do not require, justify, or stimulate murder.*

To require that every religion respect the fundamental human right of life is not a theological imposition by an outsider; it is a secular requirement. If Gibson's movie does not cause or condone murder, then his elaboration of the Gospels, however unflattering or inaccurate in its portrayal of Jews, should evoke only the driest, most restrained response. Offensive but harmless religious content is the price we pay for freedom of speech and religion.

In this regard, it is important to note that the only known act of anti-Semitism attributable to Gibson's movie so far was an offensive sign posted on a Pentecostal church in Denver—a sign that was taken down the day after it was put up and that stimulated an immediate protest by both Jews and Christians. The pastor who posted the sign apologized and later resigned, apparently in response to outrage from his own flock.

Mr. Berger's analysis of the terrible consequences of *The Passion* for Jewish-Christian relations in this country is overwrought. The evidence so far simply does not bear him out.

RABBI HILLEL GOLDBERG
Denver, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR:

As an evangelical Christian with Jewish relatives, I commend David Berger for his attempt to discuss *The Passion* "with a degree of equanimity," and I sympathize with his scholarly demurrals over Mel Gibson's departures from the Gospel text.

I agree that Gibson whitewashes Pontius Pilate, whom the New Testament shows to be downright cynical. Interestingly, here in Taiwan, where the local Christians (Protestants, at least) read the New Testament in a "fundamentalist" manner, I have been asked by students and friends who have seen the film, "Wasn't Pontius Pilate supposed to be a bad guy?"

I am rather surprised, however, that Mr. Berger misses a key point where Gibson is very true to the New Testament: the great divide in the film is not between Jews and Christians but between Jews and Gentiles (meaning, in the first century, Greek and Roman pagans). Gibson underscores this divide by having his characters speak either Aramaic or Latin.

I was bothered at first by the absence of Greek in the film's dialogue, but I suspect

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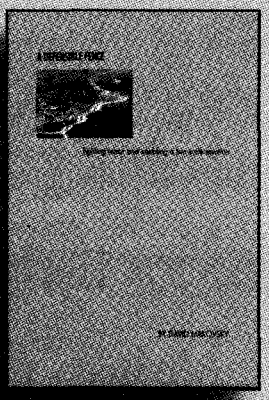

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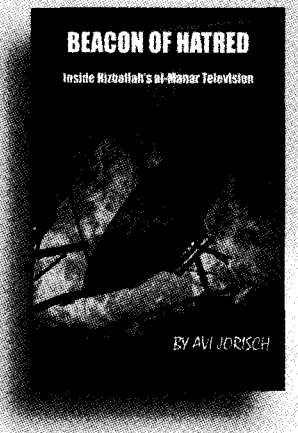

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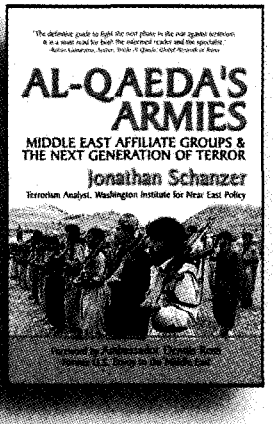
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Jonathan Schanzer
Terrorism Analyst, Washington Institute for Near East Policy

AL-QAEDA'S ARMIES: Middle East Affiliate Groups and the Next Generation of Terror

By Jonathan Schanzer

Detailing the ties of individual affiliates to Osama bin Laden's network of terror, Jonathan Schanzer examines the history and ideology of groups that have current and future significance for Western interests. *Published with SPI Books, ISBN 1-56171-884-X, 224 pp., $16.95*

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it may have been deliberately avoided in order to keep the "Christian" characters clearly on the "Jewish" side. Even St. Veronica, whom Gibson imported into the film from extra-biblical medieval legend, speaks Aramaic as she emerges from and gets chased back into the Jewish crowd. I also noticed that, of all Gibson's characters, the Apostle Peter is the one who comes closest to the swarthy, hook-nosed, anti-Semitic caricature of the Jew. And how could Mr. Berger have missed Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus—robes, official headgear, beards, staves, jewels, and all—as they noisily protest and flail their arms against the unfairness and illegality at Jesus' trial? This also was quarried from the Gospels, which describe these men as members of the Sanhedrin.

I understand that the hands Gibson showed nailing Jesus to the cross were his own. In *The Passion*, I would suggest, he is not throwing theological brickbats at his Jewish neighbors or the ancient Romans, but recognizing that his own sins necessitated the atonement Jesus made. My evangelical sensibilities cannot accept Gibson's Catholic traditionalism, but charity compels me to say that his confession of his own role in the death of Jesus gets the New Testament right again.

PETER J. HERZ
Taichung, Taiwan

TO THE EDITOR:

I did not see what David Berger saw in Mel Gibson's portrayal of Pontius Pilate. I saw a perfect example of a certain kind of modern politician: the equivocator, the civilized man who knows what is just but refuses to see it done. When did we forget what "washing one's hands" of a situation means? It has always meant moral cowardice. No wonder Pilate's wife turns away from him in disgust.

JOHN SCHUH
Lake Dallas, Texas

TO THE EDITOR:

I am a committed Catholic who has seen *The Passion* and read many discussions and reviews of it. Even though I did not agree with everything in David Berger's article, his analysis was one of the best, with valuable insights and judicious comments.

Mr. Berger overstates his case in one crucial respect, however. He writes: "In Luke, there is no scourging at all." In fact, at Luke 23:22, Pontius Pilate says, "I will have him flogged and then release him." The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John add that the soldiers placed a crown of thorns on Jesus' head and struck him repeatedly. These scriptural references weaken Mr. Berger's contention that Gibson's film runs counter to the intentions of the Gospels in its depiction of Jesus' sacrifice.

PAUL CELLA
Atlanta, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR:

David Berger exposes Mel Gibson's many gratuitous embellishments of the "Jews- killed-Christ" theme in *The Passion*, but he does not fault the Christian canon itself, partly, no doubt, out of concern that a Jewish challenge to Christian theology could damage interfaith relations and evangelical support for Israel. He appeals instead to a sense of fair play and hopes Christians will return to the ecumenical lead of the saintly Pope John XXIII, who sought in the Second Vatican Council to diffuse guilt for Jesus' crucifixion to "all humanity."

Unfortunately, this hope must contend with Gibson's popular tsunami, which mockingly takes direct aim at John XXIII's noble intention by standing it on its head. Gibson picks and chooses among the four Gospel accounts in order to find the most anti-Jewish passages, and invents other vignettes (as Mr. Berger convincingly shows) where the Gospels fail to provide the wanted detail.

Mr. Berger recognizes the beleaguered condition of Christian fundamentalists, whose beliefs have been beaten upon for decades and whom he wants to keep as friends. So do I. Yet I wonder whether Gibson's egregious assault on the ecumenical soul of the Second Vatican Council should not be answered with a sharper edge, one that puts the Gospel narrative in the docket for having created and nurtured the anti-Semitic attitudes whose terrible fruit has been two millennia of pogroms, the Holocaust, and now anti-Zionism.

MICHAEL BALCH
Iowa City, Iowa

TO THE EDITOR:

David Berger's analysis of *The Passion* is compelling and certainly enlightening in many respects. It is unfortunate, though, that he did not place the various passion plays, of which Gibson's is the most graphically violent, in some sort of historical perspective.

The concept of deicide was derived from the synoptic Gospels in the early Pauline *adversus Judaeos* tradition, and incorporated by the theologians of the patristic era, notably Augustine and Jerome, as an example of the Jews' proclivity for killing off their own prophets. It was magnified by John Chrysostom in the 4th century, and concretized when Constantine adopted Christianity for the Roman Empire. And, of course, it was finally utilized so well as a rallying point for the Jewish persecution that ensued for the next 1,500 years.

Deicide was just one device, albeit the most prominent, among other accusations well documented through the ages—ritual blood sacrifice, desecration of the host, poisoning of the wells—employed in the overarching design to fortify Christianity against its doubters, Jews being the principal ones. Early Christians made it diabolically clear to the pagan world that the Jews had incurred God's wrath, and were to be permanently punished, less for their involvement in the death of Jesus than for their refusal to recognize him as the messiah.

STANLEY P. KESSEL
Hollywood, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

There will be no need in the Middle East to add Arabic subtitles to the blood-libel scene in *The Passion* in which the Jewish crowd calls for the death of Jesus. Arabic is so close to Aramaic that, even as a non-native speaker of Arabic, I could clearly understand when the bloodthirsty crowd screamed "*demmoh aleyna*"—"his blood be on us."

Why do you think the movie is playing so well in places like Kuwait and Jordan?

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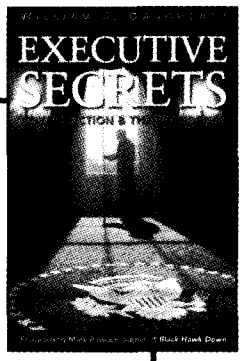

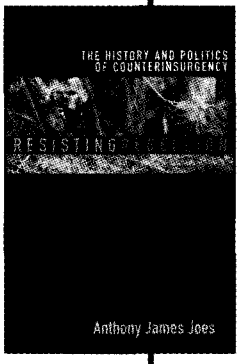

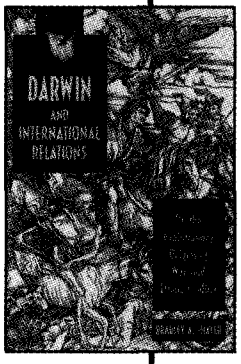

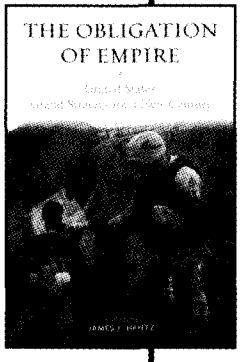

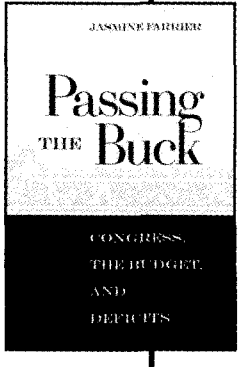

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DAVID BERGER writes:

I am as reluctant as anyone to deflect a compliment, especially from a person for whom I have high regard, but I am afraid that Eugene J. Fisher has placed me in that unwelcome position. "Betrayal of decades of Catholic-Jewish dialogue" was my own formulation, not Michael Cook's (though it certainly accords with his), and far from rejecting it, I affirmed its validity. I applied it, however, not to the overall "handling of *The Passion* by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops" (USCCB) but specifically to the review of the movie by the Conference's office of film and broadcasting.

The facts that generate this assessment are quite straightforward. In 1988, the USCCB's committee for ecumenical and interreligious affairs issued a document entitled "Criteria for the Evaluation of Dramatizations of the Passion," which reflected decades of interfaith discussion about an issue that stood near the core of Catholic-Jewish dialogue since the Second Vatican Council. In 2004, the most widely discussed and disseminated dramatization of the passion ever produced burst upon the scene, replete with precisely the sort of damaging depictions of Jews that the "Criteria" were written to prevent. In response, the USCCB unconscionably abandoned Catholic scholars who attempted to apply the "Criteria," and its office of film and broadcasting published a largely laudatory review that does not allude to them in even a still small voice. What word would Mr. Fisher substitute for "betrayal"?

What I went on to say is that this betrayal, perpetrated under the pressure of an extraordinary situation, does not nullify the many achievements of the dialogue, and I agree with Mr. Fisher that the larger picture even with respect to the USCCB's handling of the *Passion* affair is more nuanced. At the same time, it is hard to see how the "Criteria are set even more firmly now," when the official review has effectively dismissed them as irrelevant. This is much like saying that an experimental medicine is better established because it has undergone an initial, much publicized test and been found ineffective.

I warmly welcome Mr. Fisher's reference to the Catholic Church's recognition of the tenacity and adaptability of anti-Semitism, and especially of its current incarnation in the guise of anti-Zionism. The Church has made the point even more strongly in a declaration issued at a just-concluded Catholic-Jewish meeting in Buenos Aires. This declaration is rendered all the more significant by the simultaneous decision of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to declare economic warfare against Israel by adopting a policy of disinvestment. I noted in my article that "many [Christian] religious liberals . . . vehemently denounce almost any efforts by Israel . . . to defend its citizens against mass murder at the hands of terrorists." I did not, however, imagine that the overwhelming majority of leaders of a mainstream American Protestant Church would elect to wage active war, persuading themselves that they are pursuing justice and morality while effectively joining hands with suicide murderers aiming to destroy the Jewish state. Here the Catholic Church has an opportunity to defend authentic morality, and one hopes that it will adhere to principles formulated by its emissaries to the Jewish community more firmly than in the case of *The Passion*.

As for the question of whether Gibson is a Catholic at all, I remind Mr. Fisher that at a meeting we both attended, a Catholic priest of considerable theological sophistication asserted that the group to which Gibson belongs is regarded as being in "loose communion" with the Church, and no one present disagreed with him. I claim no expertise in this matter and leave such judgments to the proper authorities.

William A. Donohue's commitment to good relations with Jews is important and welcome. While I appreciate the assertion that my article stands in contrast to insulting remarks made about the movie, Gibson, and Christianity, here too I need to express some reservations about a compliment. I gratefully accept the assessment that I have avoided insult to Christianity, but it should be clear that I hold no brief for either Gibson or the movie. *The Passion*, I wrote, "exudes indifference" to the prospect of arousing hostility toward Jews, and "no filmmaker who actually cared about avoiding anti-Semitism could have produced anything resembling it." Anyone who has seen Gibson's tortuous responses when asked about the fate of the Jews during World War II—including even his dismissive "sure" when Diane Sawyer asked him if six million were killed—understands very well that he does not believe that they were systematically gassed. Though I have tentatively exonerated him from the charge of *intending* to foment hostility toward Jews, I feel nothing but disdain for him and his film.

Rabbi Eugene Korn is less charitable to Gibson than I and suspects active anti-Semitic intent. I cannot prove that this is not the case. I would only note that Gibson's apologists did not need the specific epithet "Jew" directed at Simon of Cyrene by a Roman soldier to argue that Jews are sometimes depicted favorably in his movie. Indeed, when I saw that scene I was struck by the word "Jew" precisely because I had seen no reference to it in discussions of the film. Without recourse to this detail, Gibson's defenders have pointed to Simon's positive role, and they have regularly noted, as Peter J. Herz does, the protests by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus against the condemnation of Jesus. I assign little weight to the last point because the material is in the Gospels and also contributes to the dramatic effect of the scene. What struck me in the case of Simon was that, as I wrote, "the film underscores the Jewishness of a sympathetic character where the Gospels do not."

I appreciate Rabbi Daniel Lapin's kind remarks. I described him as an apologist for Gibson because I can recall no instance in which he granted the legitimacy of any criticism of the film, and, in the exchange that I quoted in the article, he embraced Pat Robertson's assertion that nothing in it departs from the Gospel narrative. During an appearance on the *O'Reilly Factor*, Rabbi Lapin described the Christian scholars who called for changes in the screenplay as "Reform rabbis" (not a compliment in his lexicon), and even suggested

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on the *Bob Grant Show* that Jewish critics had targeted Gibson, rather than the producers of what Rabbi Lapin sees as a comparable film, because Gibson is a Christian while the other film was produced by Jews. In sum, he presented the issues in a manner strongly suggesting that critics could be driven only by considerations unrelated to the merits.

Rabbi Hillel Goldberg raises an issue full of complexity. What are the parameters of restraint in criticizing the religion of another and calling for change in the understanding of that religion? I have devoted much thought to this question for many years, struggling with it repeatedly in a 1983 essay in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (noted in my COMMENTARY article). Like Rabbi Goldberg, I argued there that the only justification for intervention is self-defense; but the situation is, I think, more complicated than he allows.

Let us take Rabbi Goldberg's very restrictive definition of self-defense—to wit, confronting a belief that requires, justifies, or stimulates murder. Needless to say, the passion narratives have done precisely that—on a large scale indeed—in the past. The era of a clear and present danger may have passed, at least in the democratic West, but the images in the Gibson film and the impression of abiding Jewish responsibility that can easily emerge from an unelaborated depiction of the Gospel narratives surely retain the capacity to generate anti-Semitism. "The question," I wrote, "of whether crowds will pour out of multiplexes to initiate immediate pogroms is hardly the criterion for evaluating the potential effect of *The Passion* on attitudes toward Jews." All over the world, this film will be seen for decades to come under circumstances that no one can predict.

My own position, then, is roughly as follows. Precisely because religious texts are subject to interpretation, it is wrong as well as unnecessary to demand that Christians reject the historicity of the Gospels. (Such a demand is also foolish and self-defeating in discussions with fundamentalists.) But it is not wrong to ask that the link be broken between the text and anti-Jewish consequences in the real world, even if those consequences will not be the imminent murder of Jews.

Let us say that the consequences of the belief in ongoing divine punishment for the sin of the crucifixion might include the delegitimation of the state of Israel, which could lead indirectly to the increased vulnerability and, yes, murder, of its inhabitants. Would this satisfy Rabbi Goldberg's criterion? What if some people would simply be more likely to see the Jews as filled with hostility toward others? One e-mail that I received in the wake of my article connected the Jews' treatment of Jesus to their current treatment of the Palestinians. All these, I think, are legitimate matters of concern, and they justify a respectful effort to encourage the dissemination of a benign understanding of sacred texts, especially since the benign understanding is in fact the official teaching of the Catholic Church and of most Protestant denominations in the United States, including fundamentalist ones.

So—did I contradict myself? I do not think so. I am vigorously opposed to any requirement that Christians deny the accuracy of their Scriptures. To repeat an example I provided in my article, it was improper to call upon Gibson to affirm that Pilate was the sort of person who would surely have agreed to execute Jesus without a modicum of hesitation. Such an affirmation flatly contradicts the Gospels and may not be demanded of fundamentalist believers. But Gibson himself, like the vast majority of American Christians, repeatedly asserted that he does not hold contemporary Jews responsible for the crucifixion to any greater degree than humanity as a whole. Since the unadorned Gospel accounts can produce a different impression, I was not demanding that he and other Christians change their beliefs when, in a newspaper piece before the film's release, I argued that a supposed fidelity to the Gospel narratives did not excuse presenting them without elaboration or nuance.

Then the film appeared with all its *anti*-Jewish elaboration and nuance. When someone takes a text and "unpacks" it by adding anti-Jewish material that is neither in that text nor in the canonized traditions of any Christian denomination, I am not prepared to be as forgiving as Rabbi Goldberg. Still, since he affirms the propriety of "the driest, most restrained response" while I advocated "measured criticism," I am not quite sure how large the gap between us really is.

David N. Friedman wants neither measured criticism nor even the most restrained response. He wants absolute silence. Since my assessment of the film and its potential consequences is considerably more negative than his, I cannot concur.

If Gibson really decided to have the characters speak in Latin and Aramaic for the reason suggested by Peter J. Herz, I cannot imagine that he would not have said so in the course of the entire controversy. Providing such an explanation would, after all, kill two birds with one stone, deflecting charges of anti-Semitism as well as scholarly objections about the use of Latin instead of Greek. I am afraid that the point never occurred to him. With regard to the hand that drove the nail into the cross, a symbolic affirmation of universal guilt that becomes evident only by recourse to information nowhere available in the film itself cannot bear the burden demanded of it.

John Schuh is surely correct in maintaining that Pilate is hardly a moral exemplar either in the Gospels or in the film. What is disturbing, however, is that the intensity of his inner ethical conflict as well as his revulsion at the spectacle of the scourging—neither of them present in the Gospel account—give him a positive moral valence, however limited, that increases the contrast with the utterly remorseless Jews.

The assertion that Pilate has Jesus flogged in Luke's account is far from the plain meaning of the text. While I have no quarrel with a Christian who attempts to harmonize the Gospels by asserting that Pilate acted on the first half of the sentence that Paul Cella quotes ("I will have him flogged") even though he was dissuaded from acting on the second ("and then release him"), any reader of Luke who is not seeking such harmonization will surely understand both parts of the sentence as the expression of an intention that was not carried out.

In Luke, the Jews respond

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to Pilate's proposal by insisting that Jesus be crucified, and Pilate relents. Even the initial intention is expressed in a much softer verb than those used in the other Gospels (*paideuo*, whose primary meaning is to rear or teach, and which the King James Bible translates as chastise, not flog; rather than *phragello'o* or *mastigo'o*, which really mean to scourge). On any reading, Luke does not directly inform us that Jesus was in fact flogged.

As for the assertions in Matthew, Mark, and John that the soldiers smote Jesus on his head with a reed or with their hands, I considered citing them in my original article as further evidence of the disconnection between the film and the Gospels. It is hard to see why the Gospel narrative would mention something so relatively trivial if Jesus had really been subjected to the unspeakably savage beating depicted in *The Passion*. This line of argument, however, seemed both inconclusive and unnecessary, and so I left it out; but if those passages do not definitively refute Gibson's bloody vision, they surely lend no support to it.

Finally, I deeply appreciate the generous comments of many of the correspondents. This was not an easy subject to address, and I am pleased that some readers feel they derived benefit from the effort.

Islam

TO THE EDITOR:

Alain Besançon's fascinating article on the Christian understanding of Islam would benefit from a consideration of the role of Judaism ["What Kind of Religion Is Islam?," May]. The reason for this is quite simple: much as Christianity sees itself as superseding Judaism, Islam sees itself as superseding both Judaism *and* Christianity. For Judaism, such supersessionary ideas do not present a challenge; Judaism was the first revealed religion and rejects any claim that a subsequent revelation, whether Christian or Muslim, renders it obsolete.

For Christians, however, the situation could not be more different. Since Christianity is explicitly based on the claim of having superseded Judaism, it cannot reject the *idea* of supersessionism, but it also cannot accept it as an absolute principle, since then it would either have to deny the legitimacy of Islam at any level or acknowledge that Islam has indeed superseded Christianity. The various Christian approaches to understanding Islam mentioned by Mr. Besançon flow directly from this dilemma.

Supersessionism poses a problem for Islam as well. At root, the concept requires a belief that God either can and does change His mind or that He might double-cross followers who adhere to one revelation by providing a new one. Christianity papers over this problem by making Jesus the son of God and claiming that Jewish Scripture foretells his coming. For Muslims, the problem is compounded. As the third revealed religion, Islam must claim that God has changed His mind twice, but that He will not do so again.

Early Muslim theologians must have been aware of this problem, which is why they present Islam as the first, and therefore only, authentic revelation, necessarily outside history and unalterable in any way. Might Muslim hostility to Western modernity be a direct result of the perception that this new way of life—that is, secular modernity—presents itself as just such a supersessionary revelation?

YALE ZUSSMAN
Weymouth, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Alain Besançon raises precisely the question that Christian theologians need to ask: how does Islam fit into our account of redemptive history? Can we find a place for a religion that has persisted and threatened Christianity for well over a millennium? Many of his answers are important and helpful.

At one point, however, Mr. Besançon criticizes Islam precisely where it should be commended, by charging that it pushes religious duty beyond the "domain" of religious life according to the biblical tradition. In his account, Christianity and Judaism teach by contrast that "man is responsible for conducting his affairs within the framework of a universe—natural, social, political—that operates by internally consistent rules. The performance of one's religious and moral duties is thus confined to a rationally definable area."

That is not, I believe, what Christianity teaches at all. Indeed, it is difficult to see how such a statement could be made about religions devoted to a written revelation that gives instruction on everything from property management to prohibited degrees of consanguinity, from civil punishments to liturgy, from the nurture of children to the treatment of the dead. The Bible knows nothing of confined "secular" and "religious" areas of life.

And that is just where Christians especially can learn from Islam. There *is* no secular space, and religious duties must indeed be "pushed beyond" the "rationally definable area" whose boundaries are set by secular modernity.

PETER LEITHART
New St. Andrews College
Moscow, Idaho

TO THE EDITOR:

I hope it will not detract from my appreciation of Alain Besançon's extraordinarily interesting essay if I observe that in certain respects his discussion does not quite reflect the subtlety of various Islamic and Christian texts.

Addressing principles of Islamic theology, Mr. Besançon writes that in it, "the world is not governed by unchanging natural law. Atoms, physical properties, matter itself: these endure only for an instant, being created anew at every moment by God." The view that he here cites without attribution may be found in part two of al-Ghazzali's *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, a work of the late 11th century.

Causal relations in nature, al-Ghazzali argues, are never necessary. "The connection between what is habitually believed to be a cause and what is habitually believed to be an effect is not necessary according to us." Beyond temporal succession, there is nothing, al-Ghazzali writes, to link "the quenching of thirst and drinking, satiety and eating, burning and contact with fire, light and the appearance of the sun, death and decapitation, healing and the drinking of medicine, the

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purging of the bowels and the using of a purgative, and so on to all that is observable among connected things in medicine, astronomy, arts, and crafts."

This argument is by no means limited to theological speculation. It is, in fact, the same argument that the skeptic David Hume would present in *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748). Al-Ghazzali, too, was a kind of skeptic, who sought rather desperately to reconcile himself to the apparent coherence of reality by concluding that "it is God who destroys and then re-creates the world at every instant of time." The linkage with Hume seems even closer when one considers al-Ghazzali's idea that it is *habits* that give the world its appearance of coherence; Hume believed the same, with the difference that the habits to which he appealed are human and not divine.

Nor is this idea foreign to Christianity. *Deus est ubique conservans mundum*, medieval Christian theologians remarked: God is everywhere conserving the world. This doctrine may be found in the *Epistles* of Robert Grosseteste as well as in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* of Thomas Aquinas. Without God's perpetual intervention, nature would at once collapse into nothingness. Similar although not identical arguments were later used by Protestant theologians to justify the doctrine of the ubiquity of the body of Christ. On this point, a warm current of sympathy joins Muslim and Christian systems.

Our understanding of medieval Islamic theology and science is still shockingly incomplete. We do know that al-Ghazzali's near contemporaries included men of outstanding scientific competence—most notably al-Biruni, by all accounts a superb mathematician and natural scientist with a wide-ranging curiosity. His collected works run to over 11,000 folio pages.

Reversing the course of al-Ghazzali's reasoning, al-Biruni assigns the coherence of the material world not to God's intervention but to the laws that bind its particles together. "That Allah is omniscient," he remarked dryly, "does not justify ignorance." Well before the advent of Western science, al-Biruni began the long and difficult process by which the power guaranteeing the coherence of nature became vested in its laws and not in its deity.

By contrast, there is a suggestive relationship between the skepticism of an al-Ghazzali and the decline of the magnificent medieval Muslim tradition in mathematics and the physical sciences. What makes the relationship even more suggestive is the fact that David Hume's own skeptical strictures some six centuries later, although brilliantly argued, would have no effect whatsoever on the course of Western science.

DAVID BERLINSKI
Paris, France

ALAIN BESANÇON writes:

I appreciate the intelligence and learning displayed by my three correspondents, and I have no deep quarrel with their comments. Let me just offer a number of observations.

Unlike Yale Zussman, I would not say that "Christianity is explicitly based on the claim of having superseded Judaism." Christians generally use words like "completed" or "fulfilled," not "superseded." They profess to believe everything Jews believe; in Christianity, the Hebrew Bible enjoys the same authority as the New Testament. Of course, Christians interpret that Bible in such a radically different way as to make it all but unrecognizable to Jews, and they place credence in matters to which Jews would never assent. But that does not amount to supersession, properly speaking, or at least most Christians would deny that it does.

By contrast, one can say that, in its own eyes, Islam "has indeed superseded Christianity" as well as Judaism. That is why Islam does not recognize the authority either of the Hebrew or of the Christian Bible.

In any case, the point of my essay was to question the common practice of "triangulating" Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, a practice in which adherents of all three religions participate. It may seem understandable and even excusable that Jews, to start there, should put Christians and Muslims on the same plane with them, often giving a slight preference to Islam (it seems less problematically monotheistic, it prohibits "graven images," its dietary regulations are reminiscent of kashrut, and so forth). Understandable or not, however, this attitude strikes me as being at variance both with the historical record and with current geopolitical realities. Those realities might at least induce one to look more favorably upon the old idea of a "filial" relationship between Christianity and Judaism, a relationship now being reasserted by many Christians, though still energetically repudiated by many Jews.

As for Christians who triangulate their own faith with both Judaism and Islam, again often with a slight nod to Islam (its "universalism" as opposed to Judaism's "particularism," the respect it accords to figures like "Issa" and "Maryam"), this seems to me inexcusable. It involves a grave distortion of Christianity, the return of a tendency that regrettably may be more alive today than at any time since the emergence in the second century of the Marcionite heresy with its utter rejection of the supposedly stern, lawgiving God of the Hebrew Bible.

But what about Muslims who put Jews and Christians on the same plane with Islam? Within the framework of Islamic supersessionism, that is perfectly logical and, from the Muslim point of view, unobjectionable. Indeed, contemporary expressions like "the three monotheisms" or "the three revealed religions" or "the three Abrahamic religions" are perfectly compatible with canonical Islamic thought (so long as the other two religions are not seen as independently legitimate faiths). Only in Judaism, and in Christianity, would I contend that such expressions are false or nonsensical.

I am not sure I understand Peter Leithart. Of the two revealed religions, Christianity, having declared most of the ritual and juridical prescriptions of the "Old Law" obsolete, allowed great latitude to secular rulers. For its part, rabbinic Judaism did of course refine and elaborate biblical law to a great extent, but in accepting the principle that "the law of the land is the law," it also consciously urged Jews to adapt and accommodate themselves to non-Jewish rule. Much later on, Jews were able to ad-

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just with relative ease to the broader secularization of society that characterized the birth of the modern.

How Islam will evolve in these matters is something I cannot predict. But in general my remarks about the intensity of its commitments were meant to be understood in light of the broader distinctions I endeavored to draw in my article between it and the two revealed religions of Christianity and Judaism.

David Berlinski's very impressive letter shows a deeper knowledge, especially of scientific literature, than my own; I found his comments most instructive. I was particularly struck by Mr. Berlinski's reference to Hume. In another, longer essay on the same subject as my COMMENTARY article, I too cited Hume—and also Malebranche, from whom Hume drew his critique of causality. In that essay I observed that both atomism and the doctrine of God's constant re-creation of the world are part of Islam's core theology, whereas in Christianity such ideas never became matters of dogma. But beyond this I dare not venture.

Art Under Pressure

TO THE EDITOR:

Having had the privilege of knowing personally both Aaron Copland and Dmitri Shostakovich, I would never call Copland a "fool," or Shostakovich a "coward," as Terry Teachout does in his provocative and (as usual) brilliantly written review ["Composers for Communism," May].

Rather, in my opinion, both composers employed certain cultural strategies that enabled them to produce memorable music in circumstances that were difficult for them, though, of course, in starkly different ways. How such strategies sometimes worked (and sometimes did not) in the Soviet Union I describe in my book, *Shostakovich and Stalin*, which Mr. Teachout discusses. In a remarkable and informative recent American documentary, the Armenian composer Tigran Mansurian compared the creative artist to a pregnant woman: both instinctively know that in order to deliver a healthy child, one must take care of oneself, avoiding all upsetting disturbances. This is a wise observation.

Any picture of creative personalities like Shostakovich that relies primarily on their public pronouncements without taking into account the dominant message of their true children—their works—will inevitably be lopsided. As Rodion Shchedrin, another composer from the former Soviet Union, commented: "Shostakovich did not wish to rot in prison or a cemetery; he wanted to tell people, through the power of his art, of his pain and his hatred of totalitarianism."

SOLOMON VOLKOV
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

At the end of his article about Aaron Copland and Dmitri Shostakovich, Terry Teachout asks, "Who was the lesser man" for his failure to confront the evils of the Soviet system? I would suggest that Mr. Teachout himself provides a clue when he writes that Shostakovich, unlike Copland, was doing his work "at gunpoint."

Granted that the risk of facing a firing squad diminished after Stalin's death, I would still challenge Mr. Teachout's statement in the final paragraph that Shostakovich could have defied the regime "without unreasonable risk." Shostakovich died in 1975. What were Rostropovich, Solzhenitsyn, and Sakharov doing at that time? Certainly not expressing their views freely and without unreasonable risk—a privilege Copland enjoyed all his life.

PETER HEIMAN
New York City

TERRY TEACHOUT writes:

True or false? "If a writer has to rob his mother, he will not hesitate; the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' is worth any number of old ladies." So said William Faulkner, and one's answer to my question will presumably determine how one feels about Shostakovich's conduct, at least in the 1930's and 40's.

As I mentioned in my piece, Shostakovich certainly appears to have held himself in contempt for the way he knuckled under to Stalin's thugs. By one account, he called himself a "whore," which is at least as loaded a word as "coward." I know I am profoundly grateful for the existence of the immortal music made possible by his "whorish" behavior, but does that mean I must endorse the behavior, too? Ought one to hold a creative genius to a lesser moral standard simply by virtue of the fact that he is a genius? Is great art *that* important? And if (as was clearly the case) Shostakovich embedded in his music symbols of protest that were intelligible to at least some of his contemporaries, should that fact alter one's view of his behavior?

I ask these questions without answering them, just as I ended my piece with an unanswered question, because they seem to me all but unanswerable. In Copland's case, however, the situation was different. Copland was a Stalinist out of personal conviction, not out of fear for his life. That makes him a fool at best—though it does not make me love his music any the less.

As for the matter of whether it would have put Shostakovich at "unreasonable risk" to speak out against Soviet tyranny in the 60's and 70's, I suppose it depends on how you define "unreasonable." On the one hand, Rostropovich, Solzhenitsyn, and Sakharov were all put under considerable pressure as a result of their protests; on the other hand, their worldwide renown kept them from being killed or tortured. It is also worth mentioning (as I failed to do) that Shostakovich was in increasingly poor health at that time. One can only expect so much of a human being.

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Commentary
September 2004

World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have to Win

Norman Podhoretz

A Note to the Reader

THIS PAST spring, when it seemed that everything that could go wrong in Iraq was going wrong, a plague of amnesia began sweeping through the country. Caught up in the particulars with which we were being assaulted 24 hours a day, we seemed to have lost sight of the context in which such details could be measured and understood and related to one another. Small things became large, large things became invisible, and hysteria filled the air.

Since then, of course, and especially after the hand over of authority on June 30 to an interim Iraqi government, matters have become more complicated. But the relentless pressure of events, and the continuing onslaught both of details and of their often tendentious or partisan interpretation, have hardly let up at all. It is for this reason that, in what follows, I have tried to step back from the daily barrage and to piece together the story of what this nation has been fighting to accomplish since September 11, 2001.

In doing this, I have drawn freely from my own past writings on the subject, and especially from three articles that appeared in these pages two or more years ago.[1] In some instances, I have woven sections of these articles into a new setting; other passages I have adapted and updated.

Telling the story properly has required more than a straight narrative leading from 9/11 to the time of writing. For one thing, I have had to interrupt the narrative repeatedly in order to confront and clear away the many misconceptions, distortions, and outright falsifications that have been perpetrated. In addition, I have had to broaden the perspective so as to make it possible to see why the great struggle into which the United States was plunged by 9/11 can only be understood if we think of it as World War IV.

My hope is that telling the story from this perspective and in these ways will demonstrate that the road we have taken since 9/11 is the only safe course for us to follow. As we proceed along this course, questions will inevitably arise as to whether this or that move was necessary or right; and such questions will breed hesitations and even demands that we withdraw from the field. Some of this happened even in World War II, perhaps the most popular war the United States has ever fought, and much more of it

NORMAN PODHORETZ, *editor-at-large of* COMMENTARY, *is the author of ten books. The most recent of them,* The Norman Podhoretz Reader, *a selection of his writings from the 1950's through the 1990's edited by Thomas L. Jeffers, was brought out earlier this year (Free Press). In June, Mr. Podhoretz was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.*

[1] "How to Win World War IV" (February 2002), "The Return of the Jackal Bins" (April 2002), and "In Praise of the Bush Doctrine" (September 2002). A fourth piece I used was "Israel Isn't the Issue" (*Wall Street Journal*, September 20, 2001).

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in World War III (that is, the cold war); and now it is happening again, notably with respect to Iraq.

But as I will attempt to show, we are only in the very early stages of what promises to be a very long war, and Iraq is only the second front to have been opened in that war: the second scene, so to speak, of the first act of a five-act play. In World War II and then in World War III, we persisted in spite of impatience, discouragement, and opposition for as long as it took to win, and this is exactly what we have been called upon to do today in World War IV.

For today, no less than in those titanic conflicts, we are up against a truly malignant force in radical Islamism and in the states breeding, sheltering, or financing its terrorist armory. This new enemy has already attacked us on our own soil—a feat neither Nazi Germany nor Soviet Russia ever managed to pull off—and openly announces his intention to hit us again, only this time with weapons of infinitely greater and deadlier power than those used on 9/11. His objective is not merely to murder as many of us as possible and to conquer our land. Like the Nazis and Communists before him, he is dedicated to the destruction of everything good for which America stands. It is this, then, that (to paraphrase George W. Bush and a long string of his predecessors, Republican and Democratic alike) we in our turn, no less than the "greatest generation" of the 1940's and its spiritual progeny of the 1950's and after, have a responsibility to uphold and are privileged to defend.

Out of the Blue

THE ATTACK came, both literally and metaphorically, like a bolt out of the blue. Literally, in that the hijacked planes that crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11, 2001 had been flying in a cloudless sky so blue that it seemed unreal. I happened to be on jury duty that day, in a courthouse only a half-mile from what would soon be known as Ground Zero. Some time after the planes reached their targets, we all poured into the street—just as the second tower collapsed. And this sight, as if it were not impossible to believe in itself, was made all the more incredible by the perfection of the sky stretching so beautifully over it. I felt as though I had been deposited into a scene in one of those disaster movies being filmed (as they used to say) in glorious technicolor.

But the attack came out of the blue in a metaphorical sense as well. About a year later, in November 2002, a commission would be set up to investigate how and why such a huge event could have taken us by surprise and whether it might have been prevented. Because the commission's public hearings were not held until the middle of this year's exceptionally poisonous presidential election campaign, they quickly degenerated into an attempt by the Democrats on the panel to demonstrate that the administration of George W. Bush had been given adequate warnings but had failed to act on them.

Reinforcing this attempt was the testimony of Richard A. Clarke, who had been in charge of the counterterrorist operation in the National Security Council under Bill Clinton and then under Bush before resigning in the aftermath of 9/11. What Clarke for all practical purposes did—both at the hearings and in his hot-off-the-press book, *Against All Enemies*—was to blame Bush, who had been in office for a mere eight months when the attack occurred, while exonerating Clinton, who had spent eight long years doing little of any significance in response to the series of terrorist assaults on American targets in various parts of the world that were launched on his watch.

The point I wish to stress is not that Clarke was exaggerating or lying.[2] It is that the attack on 9/11

[2] He did, however, seem to have committed a sin of omission. Richard Lowry, the editor of *National Review*, reports that according to John Lehman, one of the Republican commissioners, "Clarke's original testimony included 'a searing indictment of some Clinton officials and Clinton policies.' That was the Clarke, even-handed in his criticisms of both the Bush and Clinton administrations, whom Lehman and other Republican commissioners expected to show up at the public hearings. It was a surprise 'that he would come out against Bush that way.' Republicans were taken aback: 'It caught us flat-footed, but not the Democrats.'" In a different though related context, the commission quotes material written by Clarke while he was still in office that is inconsistent with his more recent, much-publicized denial of any relationship whatsoever between Iraq and al Qaeda.

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did indeed come out of the blue in the sense that no one ever took such a possibility seriously enough to figure out what to do about it. Even Clarke, who did stake a dubious claim to prescience, had to admit under questioning by one of the 9/11 commissioners that if all his recommendations had been acted upon, the attack still could not have been prevented. And in its final report, released on July 22 of this year, the commission, while digging up no fewer than ten episodes that with hindsight could be seen as missed "operational opportunities," thought that these opportunities could not have been acted on effectively enough to frustrate the attack. Indeed not—not, that is, in the real America as it existed at the time: an America in which hobbling constraints had been placed on both the CIA and the FBI; in which a "wall of separation" had been erected to obstruct communication or cooperation between law-enforcement and national-security agents; and in which politicians and the general public alike were still unable and/or unwilling to believe that terrorism might actually represent a genuine threat.

Slightly contradicting itself, the commission said that "the 9/11 attacks were a shock, but they should not have come as a surprise." Maybe so; and yet there was no one, either in government or out, to whom they did not come as a surprise, either in general or in the particular form they took. The commission also spoke of a "failure of imagination." Maybe so again; and yet the word "failure" seems inappropriate, implying as it does that success was possible. Surely a failure so widespread deserves to be considered inevitable.

To the *New York Times*, however, the failure was not at all inevitable. In a front-page editorial disguised as a "report," the Times credited the commission's final report with finding that "an attack described as unimaginable had in fact been imagined, repeatedly." But not a shred of the documentary evidence cited by the *Times* for this categorical statement actually predicted that al Qaeda would hijack commercial airliners and crash them into buildings in New York and Washington. Moreover, all of the evidence, such as it was, came from the 1990's. Nevertheless, the *Times* "report" contrived to convey the impression that in the fall of 2000 the Bush administration—then not yet in office—had received fair warning of an imminent attack. To bolster this impression, the *Times* went on to quote from a briefing given to Bush a month before 9/11. But the document in question was vague about details, and in any case was only one of many intelligence briefings with no special claim to credibility over conflicting assessments.

Thus the Bush administration, which had just been excoriated in hearings held by the Senate Intelligence Committee for having invaded Iraq on the basis of faulty intelligence, was now excoriated by some of the 9/11 commissioners for not having acted on the basis of even sketchier intelligence to head off 9/11 itself. This contradiction elicited a mordant comment from Charles Hill, a former government official who had been a regular "consumer" of intelligence:

> Intelligence collection and analysis is a very imperfect business. Refusal to face this reality has produced the almost laughable contradiction of the Senate Intelligence Committee criticizing the Bush administration for acting on third-rate intelligence, even as the 9/11 commission criticizes it for not acting on third-rate intelligence.[3]

However, the point I most wish to stress is that there was something unwholesome, not to say unholy, about the recriminations on this issue that befouled the commission's public hearings and some of the interim reports by the staff. It therefore came, so to speak, both as a shock and as a surprise that this same unholy spirit was almost entirely exorcised from the final report. In the end the commission agreed that no American President and no American policy could be held responsible in any degree for the aggression against the United States unleashed on 9/11.

Amen to that. For the plain truth is that the sole and entire responsibility rests with al Qaeda, along with the regimes that provided it with protection and support. Furthermore, to the extent that American passivity and inaction opened the door to 9/11, neither Democrats nor Republicans, and neither liberals nor conservatives, are in a position to derive any partisan or ideological advantage. The reason, quite simply, is that much the same methods for dealing with terrorism were employed by the administrations of both parties, stretching as far back as Richard Nixon in 1970 and proceeding through Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan (yes, Ronald Reagan), George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and right up to the pre-9/11 George W. Bush.

[3] Hill was referring here to the hearings of the 9/11 commission, not its final report, which did not single out the Bush administration for criticism on this score.

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A "Paper Tiger"

THE RECORD speaks dismally for itself. From 1970 to 1975, during the administrations of Nixon and Ford, several American diplomats were murdered in Sudan and Lebanon while others were kidnapped. The perpetrators were all agents of one or another faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In Israel, too, many American citizens were killed by the PLO, though, except for the rockets fired at our embassy and other American facilities in Beirut by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), these attacks were not directly aimed at the United States. In any case, there were no American military reprisals.

Our diplomats, then, were for some years already being murdered with impunity by Muslim terrorists when, in 1979, with Carter now in the White House, Iranian students—with either the advance or subsequent blessing of the country's clerical ruler, Ayatollah Khomeini—broke into the American embassy in Tehran and seized 52 Americans as hostages. For a full five months, Carter dithered. At last, steeling himself, he authorized a military rescue operation which had to be aborted after a series of mishaps that would have fit well into a Marx Brothers movie like *Duck Soup* if they had not been more humiliating than comic. After 444 days, and just hours after Reagan's inauguration in January 1981, the hostages were finally released by the Iranians, evidently because they feared that the hawkish new President might actually launch a military strike against them.

Yet if they could have foreseen what was coming under Reagan, they would not have been so fearful. In April 1983, Hizbullah—an Islamic terrorist organization nourished by Iran and Syria—sent a suicide bomber to explode his truck in front of the American embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. Sixty-three employees, among them the Middle East CIA director, were killed and another 120 wounded. But Reagan sat still.

Six months later, in October 1983, another Hizbullah suicide bomber blew up an American barracks in the Beirut airport, killing 241 U.S. Marines in their sleep and wounding another 81. This time Reagan signed off on plans for a retaliatory blow, but he then allowed his Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, to cancel it (because it might damage our relations with the Arab world, of which Weinberger was always tenderly solicitous). Shortly thereafter, the President pulled the Marines out of Lebanon.

Having cut and run in Lebanon in October, Reagan again remained passive in December, when the American embassy in Kuwait was bombed. Nor did he hit back when, hard upon the withdrawal of the American Marines from Beirut, the CIA station chief there, William Buckley, was kidnapped by Hizbullah and then murdered. Buckley was the fourth American to be kidnapped in Beirut, and many more suffered the same fate between 1982 and 1992 (though not all died or were killed in captivity).

THESE KIDNAPPINGS were apparently what led Reagan, who had sworn that he would never negotiate with terrorists, to make an unacknowledged deal with Iran, involving the trading of arms for hostages. But whereas the Iranians were paid off handsomely in the coin of nearly 1,500 antitank missiles (some of them sent at our request through Israel), all we got in exchange were three American hostages—not to mention the disruptive and damaging Iran-*contra* scandal.

In September 1984, six months after the murder of Buckley, the U.S. embassy annex near Beirut was hit by yet another truck bomb (also traced to Hizbullah). Again Reagan sat still. Or rather, after giving the green light to covert proxy retaliations by Lebanese intelligence agents, he put a stop to them when one such operation, directed against the cleric thought to be the head of Hizbullah, failed to get its main target while unintentionally killing 80 other people.

It took only another two months for Hizbullah to strike once more. In December 1984, a Kuwaiti airliner was hijacked and two American passengers employed by the U.S. Agency for International Development were murdered. The Iranians, who had stormed the plane after it landed in Tehran, promised to try the hijackers themselves, but instead allowed them to leave the country. At this point, all the Reagan administration could come up with was the offer of a $250,000 reward for information that might lead to the arrest of the hijackers. There were no takers.

The following June, Hizbullah operatives hijacked still another airliner, an American one (TWA flight 847), and then forced it to fly to Beirut, where it was held for more than two weeks. During those weeks, an American naval officer aboard the plane was shot, and his body was ignominiously hurled onto the tarmac. For this the hijackers were rewarded with the freeing of hundreds of terrorists held by Israel in exchange for the release of the other passengers.

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Both the United States and Israel denied that they were violating their own policy of never bargaining with terrorists, but as with the arms-for-hostages deal, and with equally good reason, no one believed them, and it was almost universally assumed that Israel had acted under pressure from Washington. Later, four of the hijackers were caught but only one wound up being tried and jailed (by Germany, not the United States).

The sickening beat went on. In October 1985, the *Achille Lauro*, an Italian cruise ship, was hijacked by a group under the leadership of the PLO's Abu Abbas, working with the support of Libya. One of the hijackers threw an elderly wheelchair-bound American passenger, Leon Klinghoffer, overboard. When the hijackers attempted to escape in a plane, the United States sent Navy fighters to intercept it and force it down. Klinghoffer's murderer was eventually apprehended and sent to prison in Italy, but the Italian authorities let Abu Abbas himself go. Washington—evidently having exhausted its repertoire of military reprisals—now confined itself to protesting the release of Abu Abbas. To no avail.

Libya's involvement in the *Achille Lauro* hijacking was, though, the last free pass that country's dictator, Muammar Qaddafi, was destined to get from the United States under Reagan. In December 1985, five Americans were among the 20 people killed when the Rome and Vienna airports were bombed, and then in April 1986 another bomb exploded in a discotheque in West Berlin that was a hangout for American servicemen. U.S. intelligence tied Libya to both of these bombings, and the eventual outcome was an American air attack in which one of the residences of Qaddafi was hit.

In retaliation, the Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal executed three U.S. citizens who worked at the American University in Beirut. But Qaddafi himself—no doubt surprised and shaken by the American reprisal—went into a brief period of retirement as a sponsor of terrorism. So far as we know, it took nearly three years (until December 1988) before he could pull himself together to the point of undertaking another operation: the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in which a total of 270 people lost their lives. Of the two Libyan intelligence agents who were tried for planting the bomb, one was convicted (though not until the year 2001) and the other acquitted. Qaddafi himself suffered no further punishment from American warplanes.

In January 1989, Reagan was succeeded by the elder George Bush, who, in handling the fallout from the destruction of Pan Am 103, was content to adopt the approach to terrorism taken by all his predecessors. During the elder Bush's four-year period in the White House, there were several attacks on Americans in Turkey by Islamic terrorist organizations, and there were others in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon. None of these was as bloody as previous incidents, and none provoked any military response from the United States.

In January 1993, Bill Clinton became President. Over the span of his two terms in office, American citizens continued to be injured or killed in Israel and other countries by terrorists who were not aiming specifically at the United States. But several spectacular terrorist operations occurred on Clinton's watch of which the U.S. was most emphatically the target.

The first, on February 26, 1993, only 38 days after his inauguration, was the explosion of a truck bomb in the parking garage of the World Trade Center in New York. As compared with what would happen on September 11, 2001, this was a minor incident in which "only" six people were killed and over 1,000 injured. The six Muslim terrorists responsible were caught, tried, convicted, and sent to prison for long terms.

But in following the by-now traditional pattern of treating such attacks as common crimes, or the work of rogue groups acting on their own, the Clinton administration willfully turned a deaf ear to outside experts like Steven Emerson and even the director of the CIA, R. James Woolsey, who strongly suspected that behind the individual culprits was a terrorist Islamic network with (at that time) its headquarters in Sudan. This network, then scarcely known to the general public, was called al Qaeda, and its leader was a former Saudi national who had fought on our side against the Soviets in Afghanistan but had since turned against us as fiercely as he had been against the Russians. His name was Osama bin Laden.

The next major episode was not long in trailing the bombing of the World Trade Center. In April 1993, less than two months after that attack, former President Bush visited Kuwait, where an attempt was made to assassinate him by—as our own investigators were able to determine—Iraqi intelligence agents. The Clinton administration spent two more months seeking approval from the UN and the "international community" to retaliate for this egregious assault on the United States. In the end, a few cruise missiles were fired into the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, where they fell harmlessly onto empty buildings in the middle of the night.

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In the years immediately ahead, there were many Islamic terrorist operations (in Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Yemen, and Israel) that were not specifically aimed at the United States but in which Americans were nevertheless murdered or kidnapped. In March 1995, however, a van belonging to the U.S. consulate in Karachi, Pakistan, was hit by gunfire, killing two American diplomats and injuring a third. In November of the same year, five Americans died when a car bomb exploded in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, near a building in which a U.S. military advisory group lived.

ALL THIS was trumped in June 1996 when another building in which American military personnel lived—the Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia—was blasted by a truck bomb. Nineteen of our airmen were killed, and 240 other Americans on the premises were wounded.

In 1993, Clinton had been so intent on treating the World Trade Center bombing as a common crime that for some time afterward he refused even to meet with his own CIA director. Perhaps he anticipated that he would be told things by Woolsey—about terrorist networks and the states sponsoring them—that he did not wish to hear, because he had no intention of embarking on the military action that such knowledge might force upon him. Now, in the wake of the bombing of the Khobar Towers, Clinton again handed the matter over to the police; but the man in charge, his FBI director, Louis Freeh, who had intimations of an Iranian connection, could no more get through to him than Woolsey before. There were a few arrests, and the action then moved into the courts.

In June 1998, grenades were unsuccessfully hurled at the U.S. embassy in Beirut. A little later, our embassies in the capitals of Kenya (Nairobi) and Tanzania (Dar es Salaam) were not so lucky. On a single day—August 7, 1998—car bombs went off in both places, leaving more than 200 people dead, of whom twelve were Americans. Credit for this coordinated operation was claimed by al Qaeda. In what, whether fairly or not, was widely interpreted, especially abroad, as a move to distract attention from his legal troubles over the Monica Lewinsky affair, Clinton fired cruise missiles at an al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan, where bin Laden was supposed to be at that moment, and at a building in Sudan, where al Qaeda also had a base. But bin Laden escaped harm, while it remained uncertain whether the targeted factory in Sudan was actually manufacturing chemical weapons or was just a normal pharmaceutical plant.

This fiasco—so we have learned from former members of his administration—discouraged any further such action by Clinton against bin Laden, though we have also learned from various sources that he did authorize a number of covert counterterrorist operations and diplomatic initiatives leading to arrests in foreign countries. But according to Dick Morris, who was then Clinton's political adviser:

> The weekly strategy meetings at the White House throughout 1995 and 1996 featured an escalating drumbeat of advice to President Clinton to take decisive steps to crack down on terrorism. The polls gave these ideas a green light. But Clinton hesitated and failed to act, always finding a reason why some other concern was more important.

In the period after Morris left, more began going on behind the scenes, but most of it remained in the realm of talk or planning that went nowhere. In contrast to the flattering picture of Clinton that Richard Clarke would subsequently draw, Woolsey (who after a brief tenure resigned from the CIA out of sheer frustration) would offer a devastating retrospective summary of the President's overall approach:

> Do something to show you're concerned. Launch a few missiles in the desert, bop them on the head, arrest a few people. But just keep kicking the ball down field.

Bin Laden, picking up that ball on October 12, 2000, when the destroyer *USS Cole* had docked for refueling in Yemen, dispatched a team of suicide bombers. The bombers did not succeed in sinking the ship, but they inflicted severe damage upon it, while managing to kill seventeen American sailors and wounding another 39.

Clarke, along with a few intelligence analysts, had no doubt that the culprit was al Qaeda. But the heads neither of the CIA nor of the FBI thought the case was conclusive. Hence the United States did not so much as lift a military finger against bin Laden or the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, where he was now ensconced and being protected. As for Clinton, so obsessively was he then wrapped up in a futile attempt to broker a deal between the Israelis and the Palestinians that all he could see in this attack on an American warship was an effort "to deter us from our mission of promoting peace and security in the Middle East." The terrorists, he resoundingly vowed, would "fail utterly" in this objective.

Never mind that not the slightest indication existed that bin Laden was in the least concerned

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over Clinton's negotiations with the Israelis and the Palestinians at Camp David, or even that the Palestinian issue was of primary importance to him as compared with other grievances. In any event, it was Clinton who failed, not bin Laden. The Palestinians under Yasir Arafat, spurning an unprecedentedly generous offer that had been made by the Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak with Clinton's enthusiastic endorsement, unleashed a new round of terrorism. And bin Laden would soon succeed all too well in his actual intention of striking another brazen blow at the United States.

The sheer audacity of what bin Laden went on to do on September 11 was unquestionably a product of his contempt for American power. Our persistent refusal for so long to use that power against him and his terrorist brethren—or to do so effectively whenever we tried—reinforced his conviction that we were a nation on the way down, destined to be defeated by the resurgence of the same Islamic militancy that had once conquered and converted large parts of the world by the sword.

As bin Laden saw it, thousands or even millions of his followers and sympathizers all over the Muslim world were willing, and even eager, to die a martyr's death in the jihad, the holy war, against the "Great Satan," as the Ayatollah Khomeini had called us. But, in bin Laden's view, we in the West, and especially in America, were all so afraid to die that we lacked the will even to stand up for ourselves and defend our degenerate way of life.

Bin Laden was never reticent or coy in laying out this assessment of the United States. In an interview on CNN in 1997, he declared that "the myth of the superpower was destroyed not only in my mind but also in the minds of all Muslims" when the Soviet Union was defeated in Afghanistan. That the Muslim fighters in Afghanistan would almost certainly have failed if not for the arms supplied to them by the United States did not seem to enter into the lesson he drew from the Soviet defeat. In fact, in an interview a year earlier he had belittled the United States as compared with the Soviet Union. "The Russian soldier is more courageous and patient than the U.S. soldier," he said then. Hence, "Our battle with the United States is easy compared with the battles in which we engaged in Afghanistan."

Becoming still more explicit, bin Laden wrote off the Americans as cowards. Had Reagan not taken to his heels in Lebanon after the bombing of the Marine barracks in 1983? And had not Clinton done the same a decade later when only a few American Rangers were killed in Somalia, where they had been sent to participate in a "peacekeeping" mission? Bin Laden did not boast of this as one of his victories, but a State Department dossier charged that al Qaeda had trained the terrorists who ambushed the American servicemen. (The ugly story of what happened to us in Somalia was told in the film version of Mark Bowden's *Black Hawk Down*, which reportedly became Saddam Hussein's favorite movie.)

Bin Laden summed it all up in a third interview he gave in 1998:

> After leaving Afghanistan the Muslim fighters headed for Somalia and prepared for a long battle thinking that the Americans were like the Russians. The youth were surprised at the low morale of the American soldiers and realized, more than before, that the American soldier was a paper tiger and after a few blows ran in defeat.

Miscalculation

Bin Laden was not the first enemy of a democratic regime to have been emboldened by such impressions. In the 1930's, Adolf Hitler was convinced by the failure of the British to arm themselves against the threat he posed, as well as by the policy of appeasement they adopted toward him, that they were decadent and would never fight no matter how many countries he invaded.

Similarly with Joseph Stalin in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Encouraged by the rapid demobilization of the United States, which to him meant that we were unprepared and unwilling

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to resist him with military force, Stalin broke the pledges he had made at Yalta to hold free elections in the countries of Eastern Europe he had occupied at the end of the war. Instead, he consolidated his hold over those countries, and made menacing gestures toward Greece and Turkey.

After Stalin's death, his successors repeatedly played the same game whenever they sensed a weakening of the American resolve to hold them back. Sometimes this took the form of maneuvers aimed at establishing a balance of military power in their favor. Sometimes it took the form of using local Communist parties or other proxies as their instrument. But thanks to the decline of American power following our withdrawal from Vietnam—a decline reflected in the spread during the late 1970's of isolationist and pacifist sentiment, which was in turn reflected in severely reduced military spending—Leonid Brezhnev felt safe in sending his own troops into Afghanistan in 1979.

It was the same decline of American power, so uncannily personified by Jimmy Carter, that, less than two months before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, had emboldened the Ayatollah Khomeini to seize and hold American hostages. To be sure, there were those who denied that this daring action had anything to do with Khomeini's belief that the United States under Carter had become impotent. But this denial was impossible to sustain in the face of the contrast between the attack on our embassy in Tehran and the protection the Khomeini regime extended to the Soviet embassy there when a group of protesters tried to storm it after the invasion of Afghanistan. The radical Muslim fundamentalists ruling Iran hated Communism and the Soviet Union at least as much as they hated us—especially now that the Soviets had invaded a Muslim country. Therefore the difference in Khomeini's treatment of the two embassies could not be explained by ideological or political factors. What could and did explain it was his fear of Soviet retaliation as against his expectation that the United States, having lost its nerve, would go to any lengths to avoid the use of force.

And so it was with Saddam Hussein. In 1990, with the first George Bush sitting in the White House, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in what was widely, and accurately, seen as a first step in a bid to seize control of the oil fields of the Middle East. The elder Bush, fortified by the determination of Margaret Thatcher, who was then prime minister of England, declared that the invasion would not stand, and he put together a coalition that sent a great military force into the region. This alone might well have frightened Saddam Hussein into pulling out of Kuwait if not for the wave of hysteria in the United States about the tens of thousands of "body bags" that it was predicted would be flown home if we actually went to war with Iraq. Not unreasonably, Saddam concluded that, if he held firm, it was we who would blink and back down.

The fact that Saddam miscalculated, and that in the end we made good on our threat, did not overly impress Osama bin Laden. After all—dreading the casualties we would suffer if we went into Baghdad after liberating Kuwait and defeating the Iraqi army on the battlefield—we had allowed Saddam to remain in power. To bin Laden, this could only have looked like further evidence of the weakness we had shown in the ineffectual policy toward terrorism adopted by a long string of American Presidents. No wonder he was persuaded that he could strike us massively on our own soil and get away with it.

Yet just as Saddam had miscalculated in 1990-91, and would again in 2002, bin Laden misread how the Americans would react to being hit where, literally, they lived. In all likelihood he expected a collapse into despair and demoralization; what he elicited instead was an outpouring of rage and an upsurge of patriotic sentiment such as younger Americans had never witnessed except in the movies, and had most assuredly never experienced in their own hearts and souls, or, for those who enlisted in the military, on their own flesh.

IN THAT sense, bin Laden did for this country what the Ayatollah Khomeini had done before him. In seizing the American hostages in 1979, and escaping retaliation, Khomeini inflicted a great humiliation on the United States. But at the same time, he also exposed the foolishness of Jimmy Carter's view of the world. The foolishness did not lie in Carter's recognition that American power—military, economic, political, and moral—had been on a steep decline at least since Vietnam. This was all too true. What was foolish was the conclusion Carter drew from it. Rather than proposing policies aimed at halting and then reversing the decline, he took the position that the cause was the play of historical forces we could do nothing to stop or even slow down. As he saw it, instead of complaining or flailing about in a vain and dangerous effort to recapture our lost place in the sun, we needed first to acknowledge, accept, and adjust to this inexorable historical development, and then to act upon it with "mature restraint."

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In one fell swoop, the Ayatollah Khomeini made nonsense of Carter's delusionary philosophy in the eyes of very large numbers of Americans, including many who had previously entertained it. Correlatively, new heart was given to those who, rejecting the idea that American decline was inevitable, had argued that the cause was bad policies and that the decline could be turned around by returning to the better policies that had made us so powerful in the first place.

The entire episode thereby became one of the forces behind an already burgeoning determination to rebuild American power that culminated in the election of Ronald Reagan, who had campaigned on the promise to do just that. For all the shortcomings of his own handling of terrorism, Reagan did in fact keep his promise to rebuild American power. And it was this that set the stage for victory in the multifaceted cold war we had been waging since 1947, when the United States under President Harry Truman (aroused by Stalin's miscalculation) decided to resist any further advance of the Soviet empire.

Few, if any, of Truman's contemporaries would have dreamed that this product of a Kansas City political machine, who as a reputedly run-of-the-mill U.S. Senator had spent most of his time on taxes and railroads, would rise so resolutely and so brilliantly to the threat represented by Soviet imperialism. Just so, 54 years later in 2001, another politician with a small reputation and little previous interest in foreign affairs would be confronted with a challenge perhaps even greater than the one faced by Truman; and he too astonished his own contemporaries by the way he rose to it.

Enter the Bush Doctrine

In "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" (1947), the theoretical defense he constructed of the strategy Truman adopted for fighting the war ahead, George F. Kennan (then the director of the State Department's policy planning staff, and writing under the pseudonym "X") described that strategy as

> a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies . . . by the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points.

In other words (though Kennan himself did not use those words), we were faced with the prospect of nothing less than another world war; and (though in later years, against the plain sense of the words that he himself did use, he tried to claim that the "counterforce" he had in mind was not military) it would not be an entirely "cold" one, either. Before it was over, more than 100,000 Americans would die on the far-off battlefields of Korea and Vietnam, and the blood of many others allied with us in the political and ideological struggle against the Soviet Union would be spilled on those same battlefields, and in many other places as well.

For these reasons, I agree with one of our leading contemporary students of military strategy, Eliot A. Cohen, who thinks that what is generally called the "cold war" (a term, incidentally, coined by Soviet propagandists) should be given a new name. "The cold war," Cohen writes, was actually "World War III, which reminds us that not all global conflicts entail the movement of multimillion-man armies, or conventional front lines on a map." I also agree that the nature of the conflict in which we are now engaged can only be fully appreciated if we look upon it as World War IV. To justify giving it this name—rather than, say, the "war on terrorism"—Cohen lists "some key features" that it shares with World War III:

> that it is, in fact, global; that it will involve a mixture of violent and nonviolent efforts; that it will require mobilization of skill, expertise, and resources, if not of vast numbers of soldiers; that it may go on for a long time; and that it has ideological roots.

There is one more feature that World War IV shares with World War III and that Cohen does not mention: both were declared through the enunciation of a presidential doctrine.

The Truman Doctrine of 1947 was born with the announcement that "it must be the policy of

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the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure." Beginning with a special program of aid to Greece and Turkey, which were then threatened by Communist takeovers, the strategy was broadened within a few months by the launching of a much larger and more significant program of economic aid that came to be called the Marshall Plan. The purpose of the Marshall Plan was to hasten the reconstruction of the war-torn economies of Western Europe: not only because this was a good thing in itself, and not only because it would serve American interests, but also because it could help eliminate the grievances on which Communism fed. But then came a Communist coup in Czechoslovakia. Following as it had upon the installation by the Soviet Union of puppet regimes in the occupied countries of East Europe, the Czech coup demonstrated that economic measures would not be enough by themselves to ward off a comparable danger posed to Italy and France by huge local Communist parties entirely subservient to Moscow. Out of this realization—and out of a parallel worry about an actual Soviet invasion of Western Europe—there emerged the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Containment, then, was a three-sided strategy made up of economic, political, and military components. All three would be deployed in a shifting relative balance over the four decades it took to win World War III.[4]

If the Truman Doctrine unfolded gradually, revealing its entire meaning only in stages, the Bush Doctrine was pretty fully enunciated in a single speech, delivered to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001. It was then clarified and elaborated in three subsequent statements: Bush's first State of the Union address on January 29, 2002; his speech to the graduating class of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point on June 1, 2002; and the remarks on the Middle East he delivered three weeks later, on June 24. This difference aside, his contemporaries were at least as startled as Truman's had been, both by the substance of the new doctrine and by the transformation it bespoke in its author. For here was George W. Bush, who in foreign affairs had been a more or less passive disciple of his father, talking for all the world like a fiery follower of Ronald Reagan.

In sharp contrast to Reagan, generally considered a dangerous ideologue, the first President Bush—who had been Reagan's Vice President and had then succeeded him in the White House—was often accused of being deficient in what he himself inelegantly dismissed as "the vision thing." The charge was fair in that the elder Bush had no guiding sense of what role the United States might play in reshaping the post-cold-war world. A strong adherent of the "realist" perspective on world affairs, he believed that the maintenance of stability was the proper purpose of American foreign policy, and the only wise and prudential course to follow. Therefore, when Saddam Hussein upset the balance of power in the Middle East by invading Kuwait in 1991, the elder Bush went to war not to create a new configuration in the region but to restore the status quo ante. And it was precisely out of the same overriding concern for stability that, having achieved this objective by driving Saddam out of Kuwait, Bush then allowed him to remain in power.

As FOR the second President Bush, before 9/11 he was, to all appearances, as deficient in the "vision thing" as his father before him. If he entertained any doubts about the soundness of the "realist" approach, he showed no sign of it. Nothing he said or did gave any indication that he might be dissatisfied with the idea that his main job in foreign affairs was to keep things on an even keel. Nor was there any visible indication that he might be drawn to Ronald Reagan's more "idealistic" ambition to change the world, especially with the "Wilsonian" aim of making it "safe for democracy" by encouraging the spread to as many other countries as possible of the liberties we Americans enjoyed.

Which is why Bush's address of September 20, 2001 came as so great a surprise. Delivered only nine days after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and officially declaring that the United States was now at war, the September 20 speech put this nation, and all others, on notice that whether or not George W. Bush had been a strictly conventional realist in the mold of his father, he was now politically born again as a passionate democratic idealist of the Reaganite stamp.

It was also this speech that marked the emergence of the Bush Doctrine, and that pointed

[4] The analysis offered by Kennan in "The Sources of Soviet Conduct"—as against his own later revisionist interpretation of it—turned out to be right in almost every important detail, except for the timing. He thought it would take only fifteen years for the strategy to succeed in causing the "implosion" of the Soviet empire.

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just as clearly to World War IV as the Truman Doctrine had to War World III. Bush did not explicitly give the name World War IV to the struggle ahead, but he did characterize it as a direct successor to the two world wars that had immediately preceded it. Thus, of the "global terrorist network" that had attacked us on our own soil, he said:

> We have seen their kind before. They're the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions, by abandoning every value except the will to power, they follow in the path of fascism, Nazism, and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way to where it ends in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies.

As this passage, coming toward the beginning of the speech, linked the Bush Doctrine to the Truman Doctrine and to the great struggle led by Franklin D. Roosevelt before it, the wind-up section demonstrated that if the second President Bush had previously lacked "the vision thing," his eyes were blazing with it now. "Great harm has been done to us," he intoned toward the end. "We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment." Then he went on to spell out the substance of that mission and that moment:

> The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depends on us. Our nation, this generation, will lift the dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.

Finally, in his peroration, drawing on some of the same language he had been applying to the nation as a whole, Bush shifted into the first person, pledging his own commitment to the great mission we were all charged with accomplishing:

> I will not forget the wound to our country and those who inflicted it. I will not yield, I will not rest, I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people. The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.

Not even Ronald Reagan, the "Great Communicator" himself, had ever been so eloquent in expressing the "idealistic" impetus behind his conception of the American role in the world.[5]

This was not the last time Bush would sound these themes. Two-and-a-half years later, at a moment when things seemed to be going badly in the war, it was with the same ideas he had originally put forward on September 20, 2001 that he sought to reassure the nation. The occasion would be a commencement address at the Air Force Academy on June 2, 2004, where he would repeatedly place the "war against terrorism" in direct succession to World War II and World War III. He would also be unusually undiplomatic in making no bones about his rejection of realism:

> For decades, free nations tolerated oppression in the Middle East for the sake of stability. In practice, this approach brought little stability and much oppression, so I have changed this policy.

And again, even less diplomatically:

> Some who call themselves realists question whether the spread of democracy in the Middle East should be any concern of ours. But the realists in this case have lost contact with a fundamental reality: America has always been less secure when freedom is in retreat; America is always more secure when freedom is on the march.

To top it all off, he would go out of his way to assert that his own policy, which he properly justified in the first place as a better way to protect American interests than the alternative favored by the realists, also bore the stamp of the Reaganite version of Wilsonian idealism:

> This conflict will take many turns, with setbacks on the course to victory. Through it all, our confidence comes from one unshakable belief: We believe in Ronald Reagan's words that "the future belongs to the free."

The first pillar of the Bush Doctrine, then, was built on a repudiation of moral relativism and an entirely unapologetic assertion of the need for and the possibility of moral judgment in the realm of world affairs. And just to make sure that the point he had first made on September 20, 2001 had hit home, Bush returned to it even more outspokenly and in greater detail

[5] In expressing his determination to win the war, however, Bush was mainly reaching back to the language of Winston Churchill, who vowed as World War II was getting under way in 1940: "We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end."

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in the State of the Union address of January 29, 2002.

Bush had won enthusiastic plaudits from many for the "moral clarity" of his September 20 speech, but he had also provoked even greater dismay and disgust among "advanced" thinkers and "sophisticated" commentators and diplomats both at home and abroad. Now he intensified and exacerbated their outrage by becoming more specific. Having spoken in September only in general terms about the enemy in World War IV, Bush proceeded in his second major wartime pronouncement to single out three such nations—Iraq, Iran, and North Korea—which he described as forming an "axis of evil."

Here again he was following in the footsteps of Ronald Reagan, who had denounced the Soviet Union, our principal enemy in World War III, as an "evil empire," and who had been answered with a veritably hysterical outcry from chancelleries and campuses and editorial pages all over the world. Evil? What place did a word like that have in the lexicon of international affairs, assuming it would ever occur to an enlightened person to exhume it from the grave of obsolete concepts in any connection whatsoever? But in the eyes of the "experts," Reagan was not an enlightened person. Instead, he was a "cowboy," a B-movie actor, who had by some freak of democratic perversity landed in the White House. In denouncing the Soviet empire, he was accused either of signaling an intention to trigger a nuclear war or of being too stupid to understand that his wildly provocative rhetoric might do so inadvertently.

The reaction to Bush was perhaps less hysterical and more scornful than the outcry against Reagan, since this time there was no carrying-on about a nuclear war. But the air was just as thick with the old sneers and jeers. Who but an ignoramus and a simpleton—or a fanatical religious fundamentalist, of the very type on whom Bush was declaring war—would resort to archaic moral absolutes like "good" and "evil"? On the one hand, it was egregiously simple-minded to brand a whole nation as evil, and on the other, only a fool could bring himself to believe, as Bush (once more like Reagan) had evidently done in complete and ingenuous sincerity, that the United States, of all countries, represented the good. Surely only a know-nothing illiterate could be oblivious of the innumerable crimes committed by America both at home and abroad—crimes that the country's own leading intellectuals had so richly documented in the by-now standard academic view of its history.

Here is how Gore Vidal, one of those intellectuals, stated the case:

> I mean, to watch Bush doing his little war dance in Congress . . . about "evildoers" and this "axis of evil". . . I thought, he doesn't even know what the word *axis* means. Somebody just gave it to him. . . . This is about as mindless a statement as you could make. Then he comes up with about a dozen other countries that have "evil" people in them, who might commit "terrorist acts." What is a terrorist act? Whatever he thinks is a terrorist act. And we are going to go after them. Because we are good and they are evil. And we're "gonna git 'em."

This was rougher and cruder than the language issuing from editorial pages and think tanks and foreign ministries and even most other intellectuals, but it was no different from what nearly all of them thought and how many of them talked in private.[6]

As SOON became clear, however, Bush was not deterred. In subsequent statements he continued to uphold the first pillar of his new doctrine and to affirm the universality of the moral purposes animating this new war:

> Some worry that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right and wrong. I disagree. Different circumstances require different methods, but not different moralities. Moral truth is the same in every culture, in every time, and in every place. . . . We are in a conflict between good and evil, and America will call evil by its name.

Then, in a fascinating leap into the great theoretical debate of the post-cold-war era (though without identifying the main participants), Bush came down squarely on the side of Francis Fukuyama's much-misunderstood view of "the end of history," according to which the demise of Communism had eliminated the only serious competitor to our own political system[7]:

[6] It is worth noting that Churchill, who had been the target of many derogatory epithets in his long career but who was never regarded even by his worst enemies as "simple-minded," had no hesitation in attaching a phrase like "monster of wickedness" to Hitler. Nor did the political philosopher Hannah Arendt, whose mind was, if anything, overcomplicated rather than too simple, have any problem in her masterpiece, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, with calling both Nazism and Communism "absolute evil."

[7] Fukuyama did not return the compliment. While not exactly rejecting the Bush Doctrine, he would later criticize it and call for a "recalibration." He would do this more in sorrow than in anger, but still in terms that were otherwise not always easy to distinguish from those of what I characterize below as the respectable opposition.

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> The 20th century ended with a single surviving model of human progress, based on non-negotiable demands of human dignity, the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women and private property and free speech and equal justice and religious tolerance.

Having endorsed Fukuyama, Bush now brushed off the political scientist Samuel Huntington, whose rival theory postulated a "clash of civilizations" arising from the supposedly incompatible values prevailing in different parts of the world:

> When it comes to the common rights and needs of men and women, there is no clash of civilizations. The requirements of freedom apply fully to Africa and Latin America and the entire Islamic world. The peoples of the Islamic nations want and deserve the same freedoms and opportunities as people in every nation. And their governments should listen to their hopes.

The Second Pillar

If the first of the four pillars on which the Bush Doctrine stood was a new moral attitude, the second was an equally dramatic shift in the conception of terrorism as it had come to be defined in standard academic and intellectual discourse.

Under this new understanding—confirmed over and over again by the fact that most of the terrorists about whom we were learning came from prosperous families—terrorism was no longer considered a product of economic factors. The "swamps" in which this murderous plague bred were swamps not of poverty and hunger but of political oppression. It was only by "draining" them, through a strategy of "regime change," that we would be making ourselves safe from the threat of terrorism and simultaneously giving the peoples of "the entire Islamic world" the freedoms "they want and deserve."

In the new understanding, furthermore, terrorists, with rare exceptions, were not individual psychotics acting on their own but agents of organizations that depended on the sponsorship of various governments. Our aim, therefore, could not be merely to capture or kill Osama bin Laden and wipe out the al Qaeda terrorists under his direct leadership. Bush vowed that we would also uproot and destroy the entire network of interconnected terrorist organizations and cells "with global reach" that existed in as many as 50 or 60 countries. No longer would we treat the members of these groups as criminals to be arrested by the police, read their Miranda rights, and brought to trial. From now on, they were to be regarded as the irregular troops of a military alliance at war with the United States, and indeed the civilized world as a whole.

Not that this analysis of terrorism had exactly been a secret. The State Department itself had a list of seven state sponsors of terrorism (all but two of which, Cuba and North Korea, were predominantly Muslim), and it regularly issued reports on terrorist incidents throughout the world. But aside from such things as the lobbing of a cruise missile or two, diplomatic and/or economic sanctions that were inconsistently and even perfunctorily enforced, and a number of covert operations, the law-enforcement approach still prevailed.

September 11 changed much—if not yet all—of that; still in use were atavistic phrases like "bringing the terrorists to justice." But no one could any longer dream that the American answer to what had been done to us in New York and Washington would begin with an FBI investigation and end with a series of ordinary criminal trials. War had been declared on the United States, and to war we were going to go.

But against whom? Since it was certain that Osama bin Laden had masterminded September 11, and since he and the top leadership of al Qaeda were holed up in Afghanistan, the first target, and thus the first testing ground of this second pillar of the Bush Doctrine, chose itself.

Before resorting to military force, however, Bush issued an ultimatum to the extreme Islamic radicals of the Taliban who were then ruling Afghanistan. The ultimatum demanded that they turn Osama bin Laden and his people over to

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us and that they shut down all terrorist training camps there. By rejecting this ultimatum, the Taliban not only asked for an invasion but, under the Bush Doctrine, also asked to be overthrown. And so, on October 7, 2001, the United States—joined by Great Britain and about a dozen other countries—launched a military campaign against both al Qaeda and the regime that was providing it with "aid and safe haven."

As compared with what would come later, there was relatively little opposition either at home or abroad to the opening of this first front of World War IV. The reason was that the Afghan campaign could easily be justified as a retaliatory strike against the terrorists who had attacked us. And while there was a good deal of murmuring about the dangers of pursuing a policy of "regime change," there was very little sympathy in practice (outside the Muslim world, that is) for the Taliban.

Whatever opposition was mounted to the battle of Afghanistan mainly took the form of skepticism over the chances of winning it. True, such skepticism was in some quarters a mask for outright opposition to American military power in general. But once the Afghan campaign got under way, the main focus shifted to everything that seemed to be going awry on the battlefield.

For example, only a couple of weeks into the campaign, when there were missteps involving the use of the Afghan fighters of the Northern Alliance, observers like R.W. Apple of the *New York Times* immediately rushed to conjure up the ghost of Vietnam. This restless spirit, having been called forth from the vasty deep, henceforth refused to be exorcised, and would go on to elbow its way into every detail of the debates over all the early battles of World War IV. On this occasion, its message was that we were falling victim to the illusion that we could rely on an incompetent local force to do the fighting on the ground while we supplied advice and air support. This strategy would inevitably fail, and would suck us into the same "quagmire" into which we had been dragged in Vietnam. After all, as Apple and others argued, the Soviet Union had suffered its own "Vietnam" in Afghanistan—and unlike us, it had not been hampered by the logistical problems of projecting power over a great distance. How could we expect to do better?

WHEN, HOWEVER, the B-52's and the 15,000-pound "Daisy Cutter" bombs were unleashed, they temporarily banished the ghost of Vietnam and undercut the fears of some and the hopes of others that we were heading into a quagmire. Far from being good for nothing but "pounding the rubble," as the critics had sarcastically charged, the Daisy Cutters exerted, as even a *New York Times* report was forced to concede, "a terrifying psychological impact as they exploded just above ground, wiping out everything for hundreds of yards."

But the Daisy Cutters were only the half of it. As we were all to discover, our "smart-bomb" technology had advanced far beyond the stage it had reached when first introduced in 1991. In Afghanistan in 2001, such bombs—guided by "spotters" on the ground equipped with radios, laptops, and lasers, and often riding on horseback, and also aided by unmanned satellite drones and other systems in the air—were both incredibly precise in avoiding civilian casualties and absolutely lethal in destroying the enemy. It was this "new kind of American power," added the *New York Times* report, that "enabled a ragtag opposition" (i.e., the same Northern Alliance supposedly dragging us into a quagmire) to rout the "battle-hardened troops" of the Taliban regime in less than three months, and with the loss of very few American troops.

In the event, Osama bin Laden was not captured and al Qaeda was not totally destroyed. But it was certainly damaged by the campaign in Afghanistan. As for the Taliban regime, it was overthrown and replaced by a government that would no longer give aid and comfort to terrorists. Moreover, while Afghanistan under the new government may not have been exactly democratic, it was infinitely less oppressive than its totalitarian predecessor. And thanks to the clearing of political ground that had been covered over by the radical Islamic extremism of the Taliban, the seeds of free institutions were being sown and given a fighting chance to sprout and grow.

The campaign in Afghanistan demonstrated in the most unmistakable terms what followed from the new understanding of terrorism that formed the second pillar of the Bush Doctrine: countries that gave safe haven to terrorists and refused to clean them out were asking the United States to do it for them, and the regimes ruling these countries were also asking to be overthrown in favor of new leaders with democratic aspirations. Of course, as circumstances permitted and prudence dictated, other instruments of power, whether economic or diplomatic, would be deployed. But Afghanistan showed that the military option was open, available for use, and lethally effective.

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The Third Pillar

The third pillar on which the Bush Doctrine rested was the assertion of our right to preempt. Bush had already pretty clearly indicated on September 20, 2001 that he had no intention of waiting around to be attacked again ("We will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism"). But in the State of the Union speech in January 2002, he became much more explicit on this point too:

> We'll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.

To those with ears to hear, the January speech should have made it abundantly clear that Bush was now proposing to go beyond the fundamentally retaliatory strike against Afghanistan and to take preemptive action. Yet at first it went largely unnoticed that this right to strike, not in retaliation for but in anticipation of an attack, was a logical extension of the general outline Bush had provided on September 20. Nor did the new position attract much attention even when it was reiterated in the plainest of words on January 29. It was not until the third in the series of major speeches elaborating the Bush Doctrine—the one delivered on June 1, 2002 at West Point to the graduating class of newly commissioned officers of the United States Army—that the message got through at last.

Perhaps the reason the preemption pillar finally became clearly visible at West Point was that, for the first time, Bush placed his new ideas in historical context:

> For much of the last century, America's defense relied on the cold-war doctrines of deterrence and containment. In some cases, those strategies still apply. But new threats also require new thinking. Deterrence—the promise of massive retaliation against nations—means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend.

This covered al Qaeda and similar groups. But Bush then proceeded to explain, in addition, why the old doctrines could not work with a regime like Saddam Hussein's in Iraq:

> Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons or missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies.

Refusing to flinch from the implications of this analysis, Bush repudiated the previously sacred dogmas of arms control and treaties against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as a means of dealing with the dangers now facing us from Iraq and other members of the axis of evil:

> We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties, and then systematically break them.

Hence, Bush inexorably continued,

> If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long. . . . [T]he war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act.

At this early stage, the Bush administration was still denying that it had reached any definite decision about Saddam Hussein; but everyone knew that, in promising to act, Bush was talking about him. The immediate purpose was to topple the Iraqi dictator before he had a chance to supply weapons of mass destruction to the terrorists. But this was by no means the only or—surprising though it would seem in retrospect—even the decisive consideration either for Bush or his supporters (or, for that matter, his opponents).[8] And in any case, the long-range strategic rationale went beyond the proximate causes of the invasion. Bush's idea was to

[8] As John Podhoretz would later write: "Those who supported the war, in overwhelming numbers, believed there were multiple justifications for it. Those who opposed and oppose it, in equally overwhelming numbers, weren't swayed by the WMD arguments. Indeed, many of them had no difficulty opposing the war while believing that Saddam possessed vast quantities of such weapons. Take Sen. Edward Kennedy. 'We have known for many years,' he said in September 2002, 'that Saddam Hussein is seeking and developing weapons of mass destruction.' And yet only a few weeks later he was one of 23 senators who voted against authorizing the Iraq war. Take French President Jacques Chirac, who believed Saddam had WMD and still did everything in his power to block the war. So whether policymakers supported or opposed the war effort was not determined by their conviction about the presence of weapons of mass destruction."

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extend the enterprise of "draining the swamps" begun in Afghanistan and then to set the entire region on a course toward democratization. For if Afghanistan under the Taliban represented the religious face of Middle Eastern terrorism, Iraq under Saddam Hussein was its most powerful secular partner. It was to deal with this two-headed beast that a two-pronged strategy was designed.

Unlike the plan to go after Afghanistan, however, the idea of invading Iraq and overthrowing Saddam Hussein provoked a firestorm hardly less intense than the one that was still raging over Bush's insistence on using the words "good" and "evil."

EVEN BEFORE the debate on Iraq in particular, there had been strong objection to the whole idea of preemptive action by the United States. Some maintained that such action would be a violation of international law, while others contended that it would set a dangerous precedent under which, say, Pakistan might attack India or vice-versa. But once the discussion shifted from the Bush Doctrine in general to the question of Iraq, the objections became more specific.

Most of these were brought together in early August 2002 (only about two months after Bush's speech at West Point) in a piece entitled "Don't Attack Iraq." The author was Brent Scowcroft, who had been National Security Adviser to the elder President Bush. Scowcroft asserted, first, that there was

> scant evidence to tie Saddam to terrorist organizations, and even less to the September 11 attacks. Indeed, Saddam's goals have little in common with the terrorists who threaten us, and there is little incentive for him to make common cause with them.

That being the case, Scowcroft continued, "An attack on Iraq at this time would seriously jeopardize, if not destroy, the global counterterrorist campaign we have undertaken," the campaign that must remain "our preeminent security priority."

But this was not the only "priority" that to Scowcroft was "preeminent":

> Possibly the most dire consequences [of attacking Saddam] would be the effect in the region. The shared view in the region is that Iraq is principally an obsession of the U.S. The obsession of the region, however, is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Showing little regard for the American "obsession," Scowcroft was very solicitous of the regional one:

> If we were seen to be turning our backs on that bitter [Israeli-Palestinian] conflict . . . in order to go after Iraq, there would be an explosion of outrage against us. We would be seen as ignoring a key interest of the Muslim world in order to satisfy what is seen to be a narrow American interest.

This, added Scowcroft, "could well destabilize Arab regimes in the region," than which, to a quintessential realist like him, nothing could be worse.

In coming out publicly, and in these terms, against the second President Bush's policy, Scowcroft underscored the extent to which the son had diverged from the father's perspective. In addition, by lending greater credence to the already credible rumor that the elder Bush opposed invading Iraq, Scowcroft's article belied what would soon become one of the favorite theories of the hard Left—namely, that the son had gone to war in order to avenge the attempted assassination of his father.

On the other hand, by implicitly assenting to the notion that toppling Saddam was merely "a narrow American interest," Scowcroft gave a certain measure of aid and comfort to the hard Left and its fellow travelers within the liberal community. For from these circles the cry had been going out that it was the corporations, especially Halliburton (which Vice President Dick Cheney had formerly headed) and the oil companies that were dragging us into an unnecessary war.

So, too, with Scowcroft's emphasis on resolving "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict"—a standard euphemism for putting pressure on Israel, whose "intransigence" was taken to be the major obstacle to peace. By strongly insinuating that the Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon was a greater threat to us than Saddam Hussein, Scowcroft provided a respectable rationale for the hostility toward Israel that had come shamelessly out of the closet within hours of the attacks of 9/11 and that had been growing more and more overt, more and more virulent, and more and more widespread ever since. To the "paleoconservative" Right, where the charge first surfaced, it was less the oil companies than Israel that was mainly dragging us into invading Iraq. Before long, the Left would add the same accusation to its own indictment, and in due course it would be imprinted more and more openly on large swatches of mainstream opinion.

A cognate count in this indictment held that the invasion of Iraq had been secretly engineered by a cabal of Jewish officials acting not in the interest of

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their own country but in the service of Israel, and more particularly of Ariel Sharon. At first the framers and early spreaders of this defamatory charge considered it the better part of prudence to identify the conspirators not as Jews but as "neoconservatives." It was a clever tactic, in that Jews did in fact constitute a large proportion of the repentant liberals and leftists who, having some two or three decades earlier broken ranks with the Left and moved rightward, came to be identified as neoconservatives. Everyone in the know knew this, and for those to whom it was news, the point could easily be gotten across by singling out only those neoconservatives who had Jewish-sounding names and to ignore the many other leading members of the group whose clearly non-Jewish names might confuse the picture.

This tactic had been given a trial run by Patrick J. Buchanan in opposing the first Gulf war of 1991. Buchanan had then already denounced the Johnny-come-lately neoconservatives for having hijacked and corrupted the conservative movement, but now he descended deeper into the fever swamps by insisting that there were "only two groups beating the drums . . . for war in the Middle East—the Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States." Among those standing in the "amen corner" he subsequently singled out four prominent hawks with Jewish-sounding names, counterposing them to "kids with names like McAllister, Murphy, Gonzales, and Leroy Brown" who would actually do the fighting if these Jews had their way.

Ten years later, in 2001, in the writings of Buchanan and other paleoconservatives within the journalistic fraternity (notably Robert Novak, Arnaud de Borchgrave, and Paul Craig Roberts), one of the four hawks of 1991, Richard Perle, made a return appearance. But Perle was now joined in starring roles by Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, both occupying high positions in the Pentagon, and a large supporting cast of identifiably Jewish intellectuals and commentators outside the government (among them Charles Krauthammer, William Kristol, and Robert Kagan). Like their predecessors in 1991, the members of the new ensemble were portrayed as agents of their bellicose counterparts in the Israeli government. But there was also a difference: the new group had managed to infiltrate the upper reaches of the American government. Having pulled this off, they had conspired to manipulate their non-Jewish bosses—Vice President Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, National Security Adviser Condoleeza Rice, and George W. Bush himself—into invading Iraq.

Before long, this theory was picked up and circulated by just about everyone in the whole world who was intent on discrediting the Bush Doctrine. And understandably so: for what could suit their purposes better than to "expose" the invasion of Iraq—and by extension the whole of World War IV—as a war started by Jews and being waged solely in the interest of Israel?

To protect themselves against the taint of anti-Semitism, purveyors of this theory sometimes disingenuously continued to pretend that when they said "neoconservative" they did not mean "Jew." Yet the theory inescapably rested on all-too-familiar anti-Semitic canards—principally that Jews were never reliably loyal to the country in which they lived, and that they were always conspiring behind the scenes, often successfully, to manipulate the world for their own nefarious purposes.[9]

Quite apart from its pernicious moral and political implications, the theory was ridiculous in its own right. To begin with, it asked one to believe the unbelievable: that strong-minded people like Bush, Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Rice could be fooled by a bunch of cunning subordinates, whether Jewish or not, into doing anything at all against their better judgment, let alone something so momentous as waging a war, let alone a war in which they could detect no clear relation to American interests.

In the second place, there was the evidence uncovered by the purveyors of this theory themselves. That evidence, to which they triumphantly pointed, consisted of published articles and statements in which the alleged conspirators openly and unambiguously advocated the very policies they now stood accused of having secretly foisted upon an unwary Bush administration. Nor had these allegedly secret conspirators ever concealed their belief that toppling Saddam Hussein and adopting a policy aimed at the democratization of the entire Middle East would be good not only for the United States and for the people of the region but also for Israel. (And what, an uncharacteristically puzzled Richard Perle asked a hostile interviewer, was wrong with that?)

Which brings us to the fourth pillar on which the Bush Doctrine was erected.

[9] The classic expression of this fantasy was, of course, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a document that had been forged by the Czarist secret police in the late 19th century but that had more recently been resurrected and distributed by the millions throughout the Arab-Muslim world, and beyond. It would also form the basis of a dramatic television series produced in Egypt.

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The Fourth Pillar

LISTENING TO the laments of Scowcroft and many others, one would think that George W. Bush had been ignoring "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" altogether in his misplaced "obsession" with Iraq. In fact, however, even before 9/11 it had been widely and authoritatively reported that Bush was planning to come out publicly in favor of establishing a Palestinian state as the only path to a peaceful resolution of the conflict; and in October, after a short delay caused by 9/11, he became the first American President actually to do so. Yet at some point in the evolution of his thinking over the months that followed, Bush seems to have realized that there was something bizarre about supporting the establishment of a Palestinian state that would be run by a terrorist like Yasir Arafat and his henchmen. Why should the United States acquiesce, let alone help, in adding yet another state to those harboring and sponsoring terrorism precisely at a time when we were at war to rid the world of just such regimes?

Presumably it was under the prodding of this question that Bush came up with an idea even more novel in its way than the new conception of terrorism he had developed after 9/11. This idea was broached only three weeks after his speech at West Point, on June 24, 2002, when he issued a statement adding conditions to his endorsement of a Palestinian state:

> Today, Palestinian authorities are encouraging, not opposing terrorism. This is unacceptable. And the United States will not support the establishment of a Palestinian state until its leaders engage in a sustained fight against the terrorists and dismantle their infrastructure.

But engaging in such a fight, he added, required the election of "new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror," who would embark on building "entirely new political and economic institutions based on democracy, market economics, and action against terrorism."

It was with these words that Bush brought his "vision" (as he kept calling it) of a Palestinian state living peacefully alongside Israel into line with his overall perspective on the evil of terrorism. And having traveled that far, he went the distance by repositioning the Palestinian issue into the larger context from which Arab propaganda had ripped it. Since this move passed almost unnoticed, it is worth dwelling on why it was so important.

Even before Israel was born in 1948, the Muslim countries of the Middle East had been fighting against the establishment of a sovereign Jewish state—*any* Jewish state—on land they believed Allah had reserved for those faithful to his prophet Muhammad. Hence the Arab-Israeli conflict had pitted hundreds of millions of Arabs and other Muslims, in control of more than two dozen countries and vast stretches of territory, against a handful of Jews who then numbered well under three-quarters of a million and who lived on a tiny sliver of land the size of New Jersey. But then came the Six-Day war of 1967. Launched in an effort to wipe Israel off the map, it ended instead with Israel in control of the West Bank (formerly occupied by Jordan) and Gaza (which had been controlled by Egypt). This humiliating defeat, however, was eventually turned into a rhetorical and political victory by Arab propagandists, who redefined the ongoing war of the whole Muslim world against the Jewish state as, instead, a struggle merely between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Thus was Israel's image transformed from a David to a Goliath, a move that succeeded in alienating much of the old sympathy previously enjoyed by the outnumbered and besieged Jewish state.

Bush now reversed this reversal. Not only did he reconstruct a truthful framework by telling the Palestinian people that they had been treated for decades "as pawns in the Middle East conflict." He also insisted on being open and forthright about the nations that belonged in this larger picture and about what they had been up to:

> I've said in the past that nations are either with us or against us in the war on terror. To be counted on the side of peace, nations must act. Every leader actually committed to peace will end incitement to violence in official media and publicly denounce homicide bombs. Every nation actually committed to peace will stop the flow of money, equipment, and recruits to terrorist groups seeking the destruction of Israel, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hizbullah. Every nation committed to peace must block the shipment of Iranian supplies to these groups and oppose regimes that promote terror, like Iraq. And Syria must choose the right side in the war on terror by closing terrorist camps and expelling terrorist organizations.

Here, then, Bush rebuilt the context in which to understand the Middle East conflict. In the

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months ahead, pressured by his main European ally, the British prime minister Tony Blair, and by his own Secretary of State, Colin Powell, Bush would sometimes seem to backslide into the old way of thinking. But he would invariably recover. Nor would he ever lose sight of the "vision" by which he was guided on this issue, and through which he had simultaneously made a strong start in fitting not the Palestinian Authority alone but the entire Muslim world, "friends" no less than enemies, into his conception of the war against terrorism.

With the inconsistency thus removed and the resultant shakiness repaired by the addition of this fourth pillar to undergird it, the Bush Doctrine was now firm, coherent, and complete.

Saluting the Flag Again

Both as a theoretical construct and as a guide to policy, the new Bush Doctrine could not have been further from the "Vietnam syndrome"—that loss of self-confidence and concomitant spread of neoisolationist and pacifist sentiment throughout the American body politic, and most prominently in the elite institutions of American culture, which began during the last years of the Vietnam war. I have already pointed to a likeness between the Truman Doctrine's declaration that World War III had started and the Bush Doctrine's equally portentous declaration that 9/11 had plunged us into World War IV. But fully to measure the distance traveled by the Bush Doctrine, I want to look now at yet another presidential doctrine—the one developed by Richard Nixon in the late 1960's precisely in response to the Vietnam syndrome.

Contrary to legend, our military intervention into Vietnam under John F. Kennedy in the early 1960's had been backed by every sector of mainstream opinion, with the elite media and the professoriate leading the cheers. At the beginning, indeed, the only criticism from the mainstream concerned tactical issues. Toward the middle, however, and with Lyndon B. Johnson having succeeded Kennedy in the White House, doubts began to arise concerning the political wisdom of the intervention, and by the time Nixon had replaced Johnson, the moral character of the United States was being indicted and besmirched. Large numbers of Americans, including even many of the people who had led the intervention in the Kennedy years, were now joining the tiny minority on the Left who at the time had denounced them for stupidity and immorality, and were now saying that going into Vietnam had progressed from a folly into a crime.

To this new political reality the Nixon Doctrine was a reluctant accommodation. As getting into Vietnam under Kennedy and Johnson had worked to undermine support for the old strategy of containment, Nixon—along with his chief adviser in foreign affairs, Henry Kissinger—thought that our way of getting out of Vietnam could conversely work to create the new strategy that had become necessary.

First, American forces would be withdrawn from Vietnam gradually, while the South Vietnamese built up enough power to assume responsibility for the defense of their own country. The American role would then be limited to providing arms and equipment. The same policy, suitably modified according to local circumstances, would be applied to the rest of the world as well. In every major region, the United States would now depend on local surrogates rather than on its own military to deter or contain any Soviet-sponsored aggression, or any other potentially destabilizing occurrence. We would supply arms and other forms of assistance, but henceforth the deterring and the fighting would be left to others.

On every point, the new Bush Doctrine contrasted sharply with the old Nixon Doctrine. Instead of withdrawal and fallback, Bush proposed a highly ambitious forward strategy of intervention. Instead of relying on local surrogates, Bush proposed an active deployment of our own military power. Instead of deterrence and containment, Bush proposed preemption and "taking the fight to the enemy." And instead of worrying about the stability of the region in question, Bush proposed to destabilize it through "regime change."

The Nixon Doctrine had obviously harmonized with the Vietnam syndrome. What about

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the Bush Doctrine? Was the political and military strategy it put forward comparably in tune with the post-9/11 public mood?

Certainly this is how it seemed in the immediate aftermath of the attacks: so much so that a group of younger commentators were quick to proclaim the birth of an entirely new era in American history. What December 7, 1941 had done to the old isolationism, they announced, September 11, 2001 had done to the Vietnam syndrome. It was politically dead, and the cultural fallout of that war—all the damaging changes wrought by the 1960's and the 1970's—would now follow it into the grave.

The most obvious sign of the new era was that once again we were saluting our now ubiquitously displayed flag. This was the very flag that, not so long ago, leftist radicals had thought fit only for burning. Yet now, even on the old flag-burning Left, a few prominent personalities were painfully wrenching their unaccustomed arms into something vaguely resembling a salute.

It was a scene reminiscent of the response of some Communists to the suppression by the new Soviet regime of the sailors' revolt that erupted in Kronstadt in the early 1920's. Far more murderous horrors would pour out of the malignant recesses of Stalinist rule, but as the first in that long series of atrocities leading to disillusionment with the Soviet Union, Kronstadt became the portent of them all. In its way, 9/11 served as an inverse Kronstadt for a number of radical leftists of today. What it did was raise questions about what one of them was now honest enough to describe as their inveterately "negative faith in America the ugly."

September 11 also brought to mind a poem by W.H. Auden written upon the outbreak of World War II and entitled "September 1, 1939." Although it contained hostile sentiments about America, remnants of Auden's own Communist period, the opening lines seemed so evocative of September 11, 2001 that they were often quoted in the early days of this new war:

> I sit in one of the dives
> On Fifty-second Street
> Uncertain and afraid
> As the clever hopes expire
> Of a low dishonest decade.

Auden's low dishonest decade was the 1930's, and its clever hopes centered on the construction of a workers' paradise in the Soviet Union. Our counterpart was the 1960's, and its less clever hopes centered not on construction, however illusory, but on destruction—the destruction of the institutions that made up the American way of life. For America was conceived in that period as the great obstacle to any improvement in the lot of the wretched of the earth, not least those within its own borders.

AS A "founding father" of neoconservatism who had broken ranks with the Left precisely because I was repelled by its "negative faith in America the ugly," I naturally welcomed this new patriotic mood with open arms. In the years since making that break, I had been growing more and more impressed with the virtues of American society. I now saw that America was a country in which more liberty and more prosperity abounded than human beings had ever enjoyed in any other country or any other time. I now recognized that these blessings were also more widely shared than even the most visionary utopians had ever imagined possible. And I now understood that this was an immense achievement, entitling the United States of America to an honored place on the roster of the greatest civilizations the world had ever known.

The new patriotic mood therefore seemed to me a sign of greater intellectual sanity and moral health, and I fervently hoped that it would last. But I could not fully share the confidence of some of my younger political friends that the change was permanent—that, as they exulted, nothing in American politics and American culture would ever be the same again. As a veteran of the political and cultural wars of the 1960's, I knew from my own scars how ephemeral such a mood might well turn out to be, and how vulnerable it was to seemingly insignificant forces.

In this connection, I was haunted by one memory in particular. It was of an evening in the year 1960, when I went to address a meeting of left-wing radicals on a subject that had then barely begun to show the whites of its eyes: the possibility of American military involvement in a faraway place called Vietnam. Accompanying me that evening was the late Marion Magid, a member of my staff at COMMENTARY, of which I had recently become the editor. As we entered the drafty old hall on Union Square in Manhattan, Marion surveyed the 50 or so people in the audience, and whispered to me: "Do you realize that every young person in this room is a tragedy to some family or other?"

The memory of this quip brought back to life some sense of how unpromising the future had then appeared to be for that bedraggled-looking assemblage. No one would have dreamed that these young

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people, and the generation about to descend from them politically and culturally, would within the blink of a historical eye come to be hailed as "the best informed, the most intelligent, and the most idealistic this country has ever known." Those words, even more incredibly, would emanate from what the new movement regarded as the very belly of the beast: from, to be specific, Archibald Cox, a professor at the Harvard Law School and later Solicitor General of the United States. Similar encomia would flow unctuously from the mouths of parents, teachers, clergymen, artists, and journalists.

More incredible yet, the ideas and attitudes of the new movement, cleaned up but essentially unchanged, would within a mere ten years turn one of our two major parties upside down and inside out. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy had famously declared that we would "pay any price, bear any burden, . . . to assure the survival and the success of liberty." By 1972, George McGovern, nominated for President by Kennedy's own party, was campaigning on the slogan, "Come Home, America." It was a slogan that to an uncanny degree reflected the ethos of the embryonic movement I had addressed in Union Square only about a decade before.

The New "Jackal Bins"

In going over this familiar ground, I am trying to make two points. One is that the nascent radical movement of the late 1950's and early 1960's was up against an adversary, namely, the "Establishment," that looked unassailable. Even so—and this is my second point—to the bewilderment of almost everyone, not least the radicals themselves, they blew and they blew and they blew the house down.

Here we had a major development that slipped in under the radar of virtually all the pundits and the trend-spotters. How well I remember John Roche, a political scientist then working in the Johnson White House, being quoted by the columnist Jimmy Breslin as having derisively labeled the radicals a bunch of "Upper West Side jackal bins." As further investigation disclosed, Roche had actually said "Jacobins," a word so unfamiliar to his interviewer that "jackal bins" was the best Breslin could do in transcribing his notes.

Much ink has been spilled, gallons of it by me, in the struggle to explain how and why a great "Establishment" representing so wide a national consensus could have been toppled so easily and so quickly by so small and marginal a group as these "jackal bins." In the domain of foreign affairs, of course, the usual answer is Vietnam. In this view, it was by deciding to fight an unpopular war that the Establishment rendered itself vulnerable.

The ostensible problem with this explanation, to say it again, is that at least until 1965 Vietnam was a popular war. All the major media—from the *New York Times* to the *Washington Post*, from *Time* to *Newsweek*, from CBS to ABC—supported our intervention. So did most of the professoriate. And so did the public. Even when all but one or two of the people who had either directly led us into Vietnam, or had applauded our intervention, commenced falling all over themselves to join the antiwar parade, public opinion continued supporting the war.

But it did not matter. Public opinion had ceased to count. Indeed, as the Tet offensive of 1968 revealed, reality itself had ceased to count. As all would later come to agree and some vainly struggled to insist at the time, Tet was a crushing defeat not for us but for the North Vietnamese. But Walter Cronkite had only to declare it a defeat for us from the anchor desk of the CBS *Evening News*, and a defeat it became.

Admittedly, in electoral politics, where numbers are decisive, public opinion remained potent. Consequently, none of the doves contending for the presidency in 1968 or 1972 could beat Richard Nixon. Yet even Nixon felt it necessary to campaign on the claim that he had a "plan" not for winning but for getting us out of Vietnam.

All of which is to say that, on Vietnam, elite opinion trumped popular opinion. Nor were the effects restricted to foreign policy. They extended into the newly antagonistic attitude toward everything America was and represented.

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It hardly needs stressing that this attitude found a home in the world of the arts, the universities, and the major media of news and entertainment, where intellectuals shaped by the 1960's, and their acolytes in the publishing houses of New York and in the studios of Hollywood, held sway. But it would be a serious mistake to suppose that the trickle-down effect of the professoriate's attitude was confined to literature, journalism, and show business.

John Maynard Keynes once said that "Practical men who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist." Keynes was referring specifically to businessmen. But practical functionaries like bureaucrats and administrators are subject to the same rule, though they tend to be the slaves not of economists but of historians and sociologists and philosophers and novelists who are very much alive even when their ideas have, or should have, become defunct. Nor is it necessary for the "practical men" to have studied the works in question, or even ever to have heard of their authors. All they need do is read the *New York Times*, or switch on their television sets, or go to the movies—and, drip by drip, a more easily assimilable form of the original material is absorbed into their heads and their nervous systems.

These, in sum, were some of the factors that made me wonder whether the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 would turn out to mark a genuine turning point comparable to the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. I was well aware that, before Pearl Harbor, several groups ranging across the political spectrum had fought against our joining the British, who had been at war with Nazi Germany since 1939. There were the isolationists, both liberal and conservative, who detected no American interest in this distant conflict; there were the right-wing radicals who thought that if we were going to go to war, it ought to be on the side of Nazi Germany against Communist Russia, not the other way around; and there were the left-wing radicals who saw the war as a struggle between two equally malign imperialistic systems in which they had no stake. Under the influence of these groups, a large majority of Americans had opposed our entry into the war right up to the moment of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. But from that moment on, the opposition faded away. The anti-war groups either lost most of their members or lapsed into a morose silence, and public opinion did a 180-degree turn.

At first, September 11 did seem to resemble Pearl Harbor in its galvanizing effect, while by all indications the first battle of World War IV—the battle of Afghanistan—was supported by a perhaps even larger percentage of the public than Vietnam had been at the beginning. Nevertheless, even though the opposition in 2001 was still numerically insignificant, it was much stronger than it had been in the early days of Vietnam. The reason was that it now maintained a tight grip over the institutions that, in the later stages of that war, had been surrendered bit by bit to the anti-American Left.

THERE WAS, for openers, the literary community, which could stand in for the world of the arts in general. No sooner had the Twin Towers been toppled and the Pentagon smashed than a fierce competition began for the gold in the anti-American Olympics. Susan Sontag, one of my old ex-friends on the Left, seized an early lead in this contest with a piece in which she asserted that 9/11 was an attack "undertaken as a consequence of specific American alliances and actions." Not content with suggesting that we had brought this aggression on ourselves, she went on to compare the backing in Congress for our "robotic President" to "the unanimously applauded, self-congratulatory bromides of a Soviet Party Congress."

Another of my old ex-friends, Norman Mailer, surprisingly slow out of the starting gate, soon came up strong on the inside by comparing the Twin Towers to "two huge buck teeth," and pronouncing the ruins at Ground Zero "more beautiful than the buildings were." Still playing the enfant terrible even as he was closing in on his eightieth year, Mailer denounced us as "cultural oppressors and aesthetic oppressors" of the Third World. In what did this oppression consist? It consisted, he expatiated, in our establishing "enclaves of our food out there, like McDonald's" and in putting "our high-rise buildings" around the airports of even "the meanest, scummiest, capital[s] in the world." For these horrendous crimes we had, on 9/11, received a measure—and only a small measure at that—of our just deserts.

Then there were the universities. A report issued shortly after 9/11 by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) cited about a hundred malodorous statements wafting out of campuses all over the country that resembled Sontag and Mailer in blaming the attacks not on the terrorists but on America. Among these were three especially choice specimens. From a professor at the University of New Mexico: "Anyone who can blow up the Pentagon gets my vote." From a professor at Rutgers: "[We] should be aware that the ultimate cause [of 9/11] is the fascism of U.S. for-

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eign policy over the past many decades." And from a professor at the University of Massachusetts: "[The American flag] is a symbol of terrorism and death and fear and destruction and oppression."

When the ACTA report was issued, protesting wails of "McCarthyism" were heard throughout the land, especially from the professors cited. Like them, Susan Sontag, too, claimed that her freedom of speech was being placed in jeopardy. In this peculiar reading of the First Amendment, much favored by leftists in general, they were free to say anything they liked, but the right to free speech ended where criticism of what they had said began.

Actually, however, with rare exceptions, attempts to stifle dissent on the campus were largely directed at the many students and the few faculty members who *supported* the 9/11 war. All these attempts could be encapsulated into a single phenomenon: on a number of campuses, students or professors who displayed American flags or patriotic posters were forced to take them down. As for Susan Sontag's freedom of speech, hardly had the ink dried on her post-9/11 piece before she became the subject of countless fawning reports and interviews in periodicals and on television programs around the world.

Speaking of television, it was soon drowning us with material presenting Islam in glowing terms. Mainly, these programs took their cue from the President and other political leaders. Out of the best of motives, and for prudential reasons as well, elected officials were striving mightily to deny that the war against terrorism was a war against Islam. Hence they never ceased heaping praises on the beauties of that religion, about which few of them knew anything.

But it was from the universities, not from the politicians, that the substantive content of these broadcasts derived, in interviews with academics, many of them Muslims themselves, whose accounts of Islam were selectively roseate. Sometimes they were even downright untruthful, especially in sanitizing the doctrine of jihad or holy war, or in misrepresenting the extent to which leading Muslim clerics all over the world had been celebrating suicide bombers—not excluding those who had crashed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon—as heroes and martyrs.

I do not bring this up in order to enter into a theological dispute. My purpose, rather, is to offer another case study in the continued workings of the trickle-down effect I have already described. Thus, hard on the heels of 9/11, the universities began adding innumerable courses on Islam to their curricula. On the campus, "understanding Islam" inevitably translated into apologetics for it, and most of the media dutifully followed suit. The media also adopted the stance of neutrality between the terrorists and ourselves that prevailed among the relatively moderate professoriate, as when the major television networks ordered their anchors to avoid exhibiting partisanship.

Here the great exception was the Fox News Channel. The *New York Times*, in an article deploring the fact that Fox was covering the war from a frankly pro-American perspective, expressed relief that no other network had so cavalierly discarded the sacred conventions dictating that journalists, in the words of the president of ABC News, must "maintain their neutrality in times of war."

Although the vast majority of those who blamed America for having been attacked were on the Left, a few voices on the Right joined this perverted chorus. Speaking on Pat Robertson's TV program, the Reverend Jerry Falwell delivered himself of the view that God was punishing the United States for the moral decay exemplified by a variety of liberal groups among us. Both later apologized for singling out these groups, but each continued to insist that God was withdrawing His protection from America because all of us had become great sinners. And in the amen corner that quickly formed on the secular Right, commentators like Robert Novak and Pat Buchanan added that we had called the attack down on our heads not so much by our willful disobedience to divine law as by our manipulated obedience to Israel.

Oddly enough, however, within the Arab world itself, there was much less emphasis on Israel as the root cause of the attacks than was placed on it by most, if not all, of Buchanan's fellow paleoconservatives on the Right. Even to Osama bin Laden himself, support of Israel ranked only third on a list of our "crimes" against Islam.

Not, to be sure, that Arabs everywhere—together with most non-Arab Middle Eastern Muslims like the Iranians—had given up their dream of wiping Israel off the map. To anyone who thought otherwise, Fouad Ajami of Johns Hopkins, an American who grew up as a Muslim in Lebanon, had this to say about the Arab world's "great refusal" to accept Israel under any conditions whatsoever:

> The great refusal persists in that "Arab street" of ordinary men and women, among the intellectuals and the writers, and in the professional syndicates. . . . The force of this refusal can be seen in the press of the governments and of the

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> oppositionists, among the secularists and the Islamists alike, in countries that have concluded diplomatic agreements with Israel and those that haven't.

Ajami emphasized that the great refusal remained "fiercest in Egypt," notwithstanding the peace treaty it had signed with Israel in 1978. It might have been expected, then, that the Egyptians would be eager to blame the widespread animus against the U.S. in their own country on American policy toward Israel, especially since Egypt, being second only to the Jewish state as a recipient of American aid, had a powerful incentive to explain away so ungrateful a response to the benevolent treatment it was receiving at our hands. But no. Only about two weeks before 9/11, Ab'd Al-Mun'im Murad, a columnist in *Al-Akhbar*, a daily newspaper sponsored by the Egyptian government, wrote:

> The conflict that we call the Arab-Israeli conflict is, in truth an Arab conflict with Western, and particularly American, colonialism. The U.S. treats [the Arabs] as it treated the slaves inside the American continent. To this end, [the U.S.] is helped by the smaller enemy, and I mean Israel.

In another piece, the same writer expanded on this unusually candid acknowledgment:

> The issue no longer concerns the Israeli-Arab conflict. The real issue is the Arab-American conflict—Arabs must understand that the U.S. is not "the American friend"—and its task, past, present, and future, is [to impose] hegemony on the world, primarily on the Middle East and the Arab world.

Then, in a third piece, also published in late August, Murad gave us an inkling of the reciprocal "task" he had in mind to be performed on America:

> The Statue of Liberty, in New York Harbor, must be destroyed because of . . . the idiotic American policy that goes from disgrace to disgrace in the swamp of bias and blind fanaticism. . . . The age of the American collapse has begun.

IF THIS was the kind of thing we were getting from an Arab country that everyone regarded as "moderate," in radical states like Iraq and Iran nothing less would suffice than identifying America as the "Great Satan." As for the Palestinians, their contempt for America was hardly exceeded by their loathing of Israel. For example, the mufti—or chief cleric—appointed by the Palestinian Authority under Yasir Arafat had prayed that God would "destroy America," while the editor of a leading Palestinian journal proclaimed:

> History does not remember the United States, but it remembers Iraq, the cradle of civilization. . . . History remembers every piece of Arab land, because it is the bosom of human civilization. On the other hand, the [American] murderers of humanity, the creators of the barbaric culture and the bloodsuckers of nations, are doomed to death and destined to shrink to a microscopic size, like Micronesia.

The absence of even a word here about Israel showed that if the Jewish state had never come into existence, the United States would still have stood as an embodiment of everything that most of these Arabs considered evil. Indeed, the hatred of Israel was in large part a surrogate for anti-Americanism, rather than the reverse. Israel was seen as the spearhead of the American drive for domination over the Middle East. As such, the Jewish state was a translation of America into, as it were, Hebrew—the "little enemy," the "little Satan." To rid the region of it would thus be tantamount to cleansing an area belonging to Islam (*dar al-Islam*) of the blasphemous political, social, and cultural influences emanating from a barbaric and murderous force. But the force, so to speak, was with America, of which Israel was merely an instrument.

Although Buchanan and Novak were earlier and more outspoken in blaming 9/11 on American friendliness toward Israel, this idea was not confined to the Right or to the marginal precincts of paleoconservatism. On the contrary: while it popped up on the Right, it thoroughly pervaded the radical Left and much of the soft Left, and was even espoused by a number of liberal centrists like Mickey Kaus. For the moment, indeed, the blame-Israel-firsters were concentrated most heavily on the Left.

It was also on the Left, and above all in the universities, that their fraternal twins, the blame-America-firsters, were located. Yet Eric Foner, a professor of history at my own alma mater, Columbia, risibly claimed that the ACTA report was misleading since the polls proved that there was "firm support" for the war among college students. "If our aim is to indoctrinate students with unpatriotic beliefs," Foner smirked, "we're obviously doing a very poor job of it."

True enough. But what Foner, as a historian, must have known but neglected to mention was that even at the height of the radical fevers on the campus in the 1960's, only a minority of students sided with the

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antiwar radicals. Still, even though they were in the majority, the non-radical students were unable to make themselves heard above the antiwar din, and whenever they tried, they were shouted down. This is how it was, too, on the campus after 9/11. There were, here and there, brave defiers of the academic orthodoxies. But mostly, the silent majority remained silent, for fear of incurring the disapproval of their teachers, or even of being punished for the crime of "insensitivity."

Such, then, was the assault that began to be mounted within hours of 9/11 by the guerrillas-with-tenure in the universities, along with their spiritual and political disciples scattered throughout other quarters of our culture. Could this "tiny handful of aging Rip van Winkles," as they were breezily brushed off by one commentator, grow into a force as powerful as the "jackal bins" of yesteryear? Was the upsurge of confidence in America, and American virtue, that spontaneously materialized on 9/11 strong enough to withstand them this time around?

Some who shared my apprehensions believed that if things went well on the military front, all would be well on the home front, too. And that is how it appeared from the effect wrought by the spectacular success of the Afghanistan campaign, which disposed of the "quagmire" theory and also dampened antiwar activity on at least a number of campuses. Nevertheless, the mopping-up operation in Afghanistan created an opportunity for more subtle forms of opposition to gain traction. There were complaints that the terrorists captured in Afghanistan and then sent to a special facility in Guantanamo were not being treated as regular prisoners of war. And there were also allegations of the threat to civil liberties posed in America itself by measures like the Patriot Act, which had been designed to ward off any further terrorist attacks at home. Although these concerns were mostly based on misreadings of the Geneva Convention and of the Patriot Act itself, some people no doubt raised them in good faith. But there is also no doubt that such issues could—and did—serve as a respectable cover for wholesale opposition to the entire war.

Another respectable cover was the charge that Bush was following a policy of "unilateralism." The alarm over this supposedly unheard-of outrage was first sounded by the chancelleries and chattering classes of Western Europe when Bush stated that, in taking the fight to the terrorists and their sponsors, we would prefer to do so with allies and with the blessing of the UN, but if necessary we would go it alone and without an imprimatur from the Security Council.

This was too much for the Europeans. Having duly offered us their condolences over 9/11, they could barely let a decent interval pass before going back into the ancient family business of showing how vastly superior in wisdom and finesse they were to the Americans, whose primitive character was once again on display in the "simplistic" ideas and crude moralizing of George W. Bush. Now they urged that our military operations end with Afghanistan, and that we leave the rest to diplomacy in deferential consultation with the great masters of that recondite art in Paris and Brussels.

Taking their cue from these masters, the *New York Times*, along with many other publications ranging from the Center to the hard Left—and soon to be seconded by all the Democratic candidates in the presidential primaries, except for Senator Joseph Lieberman—began hitting Bush for recklessness and overreaching. What we saw developing here was a broader coalition than the antiwar movement spawned by Vietnam had managed to put together, especially in its first few years. The antiwar movement then had been made up almost entirely of leftists and liberals, whereas this new movement was bringing together the whole of the hard Left, elements of the soft Left, and sectors of the American Right.

Treading the path previously marked out by his colleague Mickey Kaus on the issue of Israel, Michael Kinsley of the soft Left allied himself with Pat Buchanan in bringing forth yet another respectable cover. This was to indict the President for evading the Constitution by proposing to fight undeclared wars. Meanwhile, the same charge was moving into the political mainstream through Democratic Senators like Robert Byrd, Edward M. Kennedy, and Tom Daschle, though they also continued carrying on about quagmires and slippery slopes and "unilateralism."

I for one was certain that, as the military facet of World War IV widened—with Iraq clearly being the next most likely front—opposition would not only grow but would acquire enough assurance to dispense with any respectable covers. Which was to say that it would be taken over by extremists and radicalized. About this I turned out to be correct, while those who scoffed at the "jackal bins" and the "aging Rip Van Winkles" as a politically insignificant bunch turned out to be wrong. But I never imagined that the new antiwar movement would so rapidly arrive at the stage of virulence it had taken years for its ancestors of the Vietnam era to reach.

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Varieties of Anti-Americanism

A POSSIBLE explanation of the great velocity achieved by the new antiwar movement was that, like the respectable critique immediately preceding it, the radical opposition was following the lead of European opinion. In this instance, encouragement and reinforcement came from the almost incredible degree of hostility to America that erupted in the wake of 9/11 all over the European continent, and most blatantly in France and Germany, and that gathered even more steam in the run-up to the battle of Iraq. If demonstrations and public-opinion polls could be believed, huge numbers of Europeans loathed the United States so deeply that they were unwilling to side with it even against one of the most tyrannical and murderous despots on earth.

That this was the feeling in the Muslim world did not come as a surprise. Unlike in Europe, where the attacks of 9/11 did elicit a passing moment of sympathy for the United States ("We Are All Americans Now," proclaimed a headline the next day in the leading leftist daily in Paris), in the realm of Islam the news of 9/11 brought dancing in the streets and screams of jubilation. Almost to a man, Muslim clerics in their sermons assured the faithful that in striking a blow against the "Great Satan," Osama bin Laden had acted as a jihadist, or holy warrior, in strict accordance with the will of God.

This could have been predicted from a debate on the topic "Bin Laden—The Arab Despair and American Fear" that was televised on the Arabic-language network Al-Jazeera about two months before 9/11. Using "American Fear" in the title was a bit premature, since this was a time when very few Americans were frightened by Islamic terrorism, for the simple reason that scarcely any had ever heard of bin Laden or al Qaeda. Be that as it may, at the conclusion of the program, the host said to the lone guest who had been denouncing bin Laden as a terrorist: "I am looking at the viewers' reactions for one that would support your positions—but . . . I can't find any." He then cited "an opinion poll in a Kuwaiti paper which showed that 69 percent of Kuwaitis, Egyptians, Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians think bin Laden is an Arab hero and an Islamic jihad warrior." And on the basis of the station's own poll, he also estimated that among all Arabs "from the Gulf to the Ocean," the proportion sharing this view of bin Laden was "maybe even 99 percent."

Surely, then, the chairman of the Syrian Arab Writers Associations was speaking for hordes of his "brothers" in declaring shortly after 9/11 that

> When the twin towers collapsed . . . I felt deep within me like someone delivered from the grave; I [felt] that I was being carried in the air above the corpse of the mythological symbol of arrogant American imperialist power. . . . My lungs filled with air, and I breathed in relief, as I had never breathed before.

If this was how the Arab/Muslim world largely felt about 9/11, what could have been expected from that world when the United States picked itself up off the ground—Ground Zero, to be exact—and began fighting back? What could have been expected is precisely what happened: another furious outburst of anti-Americanism. Only this time the outbursts were infused not by jubilation but by the desperate hope that the United States would somehow be humiliated. This hope was soon extinguished by the quick defeat of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, but it was immediately rekindled by the way Saddam Hussein was standing up against America. Saddam had killed hundreds of thousands of Muslims in Iran, and countless Arabs in his own country and Kuwait. Obviously, however, to his Arab and Muslim "brothers" this was completely canceled out by his defiance of the United States.

Was there, perhaps, an element of the same twisted sentiment in the willingness of millions upon millions of Europeans to lend de-facto aid and comfort to this monster? Of course, the claim was that most such people were neither pro-Saddam nor anti-American: all they wanted was to "give peace a chance." But this claim was belied by the slogans, the body language, the speeches, and the manifestos of the "peace" party. Though hatred of America may not have been universal among opponents of American military action, it was obviously very widespread and very deep. And though other considerations (pacifist sentiment, concern about civilian casualties, contempt for George Bush, faith in the UN, etc.) were at work, these factors had no trouble coexisting harmoniously with extreme hostility to the United States.

Thus, within two months of 9/11, a survey of influential people in 23 countries was undertaken by the Pew Research Center, the Princeton Survey Research Associates, and the *International Herald*

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Tribune. Here is how a British newspaper summarized the findings:

> Did America somehow ask for the terrorist outrages in New York and Washington? . . . [M]ost people of influence in the rest of the world . . . believe that, to a certain extent, the U.S. was asking for it. . . . From its closest allies, in Europe, to the Middle East, Russia, and Asia, a uniform 70 percent said people considered it good that after September 11 Americans had realized what it was to be vulnerable.

It would therefore seem that the Italian playwright Dario Fo, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1997, was more representative of European opinion than he may at first have appeared when spewing out the following sentiment:

> The great speculators wallow in an economy that every year kills tens of millions of people with poverty—so what is 20,000 [*sic*] dead in New York? Regardless of who carried out the massacre, this violence is the legitimate daughter of the culture of violence, hunger, and inhumane exploitation.

In France, a leading philosopher and social theorist, Jean Baudrillard, produced a somewhat different type of apologia for the terrorists of 9/11 and their ilk. This was so laden with postmodern jargon and so convoluted that it bordered on parody ("The collapse of the towers of the World Trade Center is unimaginable, but this does not suffice to make it a real event"). But Baudrillard's piece did at least contain a revealing confession:

> That we have dreamed of this event, that everyone without exception has dreamed of it, . . . is unacceptable for the Western moral conscience, but it is still a fact. . . . Ultimately, they [al Qaeda] did it, but we willed it.

Much the same idea, in even more straightforward terms, was espoused across the Channel by Mary Beard, a teacher of classics at my other alma mater, Cambridge University, who wrote: "[H]owever tactfully you dress it up, the United States had it coming. . . . World bullies . . . will in the end pay the price." With this the highly regarded novelist Martin Amis agreed. But Beard's old-fashioned English plainness evidently being a little too plain for him, Amis resorted to a bit of fancy continental footwork in formulating his own endorsement of the idea that America had been asking for it:

> Terrorism is political communication by other means. The message of September 11 ran as follows: America, it is time you learned how implacably you are hated. . . . Various national characteristics—self-reliance, a fiercer patriotism than any in Western Europe, an assiduous geographical incuriosity—have created a deficit of empathy for the sufferings of people far away.

What on earth was going on here? After 9/11, most Americans had gradually come to recognize that we were hated by the terrorists who had attacked us and their Muslim cheerleaders not for our failings and sins but precisely for our virtues as a free and prosperous country. But why should we be hated by hordes of people living in other free and prosperous countries? In their case, presumably, it must be for our sins. And yet most of us knew for certain that, whatever sins we might have committed, they were not the ones of which the Europeans kept accusing us.

To wit: far from being a nation of overbearing bullies, we were humbly begging for the support of tiny countries we could easily have pushed around. Far from being "unilateralists," we were busy soliciting the gratuitous permission and the dubious blessing of the Security Council before taking military action against Saddam Hussein. Far from "rushing into war," we were spending months dancing a diplomatic gavotte in the vain hope of enlisting the help of France, Germany, and Russia. And so on, and so on, down to the last detail in the catalogue.

What, then, was going on? An answer to this puzzling question that would eventually gain perhaps the widest circulation came from Robert Kagan of the Carnegie Endowment. In a catchy formulation that soon became famous, Kagan proposed that Americans were from Mars and Europeans were from Venus. Expanding on this formulation, he wrote:

> On the all-important question of power—the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power—American and European perspectives are diverging. Europe is turning away from power, or to put it a little differently, it is moving beyond power into a self-contained world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and cooperation. It is entering a post-historical paradise of peace and relative prosperity, the realization of Kant's "Perpetual Peace." The United States, meanwhile, remains mired in history, exercising power in the anarchic Hobbesian world where international laws and rules are unre-

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liable and where true security and the defense and promotion of a liberal order still depend on the possession and use of military might.

In developing his theory, Kagan got many things right and cast a salubrious light into many dark corners. But it also seemed to me that he was putting the shoes of his theory on the wrong feet. Although I fully accepted Kagan's description of the divergent attitudes toward military power, I did not agree that the Europeans were already living in the future while the United States remained "mired" in the past. In my judgment, the opposite was closer to the truth.

The "post-historical paradise" into which the Europeans were supposedly moving struck me as nothing more than the web of international institutions that had been created at the end of World War II under the leadership of the United States in the hope that they would foster peace and prosperity. These included the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Court, and others. Then after 1947, and again under the leadership of the United States, adaptations were made to the already existing institutions and new ones like NATO were added to fit the needs of World War III. With the victorious conclusion of World War III in 1989-90, the old international order became obsolete, and new arrangements tailored to a new era would have to be forged. But more than a decade elapsed before 9/11 finally made the contours of the "post-cold-war era" clear enough for these new arrangements to begin being developed.

Looked at from this angle, the Bush Doctrine revealed itself as an extremely bold effort to break out of the institutional framework and the strategy constructed to fight the last war. But it was more: it also drew up a blueprint for a new structure and a new strategy to fight a different breed of enemy in a war that was just starting and that showed signs of stretching out into the future as far as the eye could see. Facing the realities of what now confronted us, Bush had come to the conclusion that few if any of the old instrumentalities were capable of defeating this new breed of enemy, and that the strategies of the past were equally helpless before this enemy's way of waging war. To move into the future meant to substitute preemption for deterrence, and to rely on American military might rather than the "soft power" represented by the UN and the other relics of World War III. Indeed, not even the hard power of NATO—which had specifically been restricted by design to the European continent and whose deployment in other places could, and would be, obstructed by the French—was of much use in the world of the future.

Examined from this same angle, the European justifications for resisting the Bush Doctrine—the complaints about "unilateralism," trigger-happiness, and the rest—were unveiled as mere rationalizations. Here I went along with Kagan in tracing these rationalizations to a decline in the power of the Europeans. He put it very well:

> World War II all but destroyed European nations as global powers. . . . For a half-century after World War II, however, this weakness was masked by the unique geopolitical circumstances of the cold war. Dwarfed by the two superpowers on its flanks, a weakened Europe nevertheless served as the central strategic theater of the worldwide struggle between Communism and democratic capitalism. . . . Although shorn of most traditional measures of great-power status, Europe remained the geopolitical pivot, and this, along with lingering habits of world leadership, allowed Europeans to retain international influence well beyond what their sheer military capabilities might have afforded. Europe lost this strategic centrality after the cold war ended, but it took a few more years for the lingering mirage of European global power to fade.

SO FAR, so good. Where I parted company with Kagan's analysis was over his acquiescence in the claim that the Europeans had in fact made the leap into the post-national, or postmodern, "Kantian paradise" of the future. To me it seemed clear that it was they, and not we Americans, who were "mired" in the past. They were fighting tooth and nail against the American effort to move into the future precisely because holding onto the ideas, the strategic habits, and the international institutions of the cold war would allow them to go on exerting "international influence well beyond what their sheer military capabilities might have afforded." It was George W. Bush—that "simplistic" moralizer and trigger-happy "cowboy," that flouter of international law and reckless unilateralist—who had possessed the wit to see the future and had summoned up the courage to cross over into it.

But Bush was also a politician, and as such he felt it necessary to make some accommodation to the pressures coming at him both at home and from abroad. What this required was an occasional return visit to the past. On such visits, as when he would seek endorsements from the UN Security Council, he showed a polite measure of deference to those, again

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both at home and abroad, who insisted on reading the Bush Doctrine not as a blueprint for the future but as a reckless repudiation of the approach favored by the allegedly more sophisticated Europeans and their American counterparts. In Kagan's apt description of how the Europeans saw themselves:

> Europeans insist they approach problems with greater nuance and sophistication. They try to influence others through subtlety and indirection. . . . They generally favor peaceful responses to problems, preferring negotiation, diplomacy, and persuasion to coercion. They are quicker to appeal to international law, international conventions, and international opinion to adjudicate disputes. They try to use commercial and economic ties to bind nations together. They often emphasize process over result, believing that ultimately process can become substance.

None of this was new: the Europeans had made almost exactly the same claim of superior sophistication during the Reagan years. At that time—in 1983—it had elicited a definitive comment from Owen Harries (the former head of policy planning in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and himself a member of the realist school):

> When one is exposed to this claim of superior realism and sophistication, one's first inclination is to ask where exactly is the evidence for it. If one considers some of the salient episodes in the history of Europe in this century—the events leading up to 1914, the Versailles peace conference, Munich, the extent of the effort Europe has been prepared to make to secure its own defense since 1948, and the current attitude toward the defense of its vital interests in the Persian gulf—one is not irresistibly led to concede European superiority.

Two decades later, Harries as a realist would have his own grave reservations about the Bush Doctrine. But I had no hesitation in adding the "sophisticated" European opposition to it as the latest episode in the long string of disastrously mistaken judgments he had enumerated back in 1983.

Unrealistic Realists

The astonishing success of the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq made a hash of the skepticism of the many pundits who had been so sure that we had too few troops or were following the wrong battle plan. Instead of getting bogged down, as they had predicted, our forces raced through these two campaigns in record time; and instead of ten of thousands of body bags being flown home, the casualties were numbered in the hundreds. As the military historian Victor Davis Hanson summarized what had transpired in Iraq:

> In a span of about three weeks, the United States military overran a country the size of California. It utterly obliterated Saddam Hussein's military hardware . . . and tore apart his armies. Of the approximately 110 American deaths in the course of the hostilities, fully a fourth occurred as a result of accidents, friendly fire, or peacekeeping mishaps rather than at the hands of enemy soldiers. The extraordinarily low ratio of total American casualties per number of U.S. soldiers deployed . . . is almost unmatched in modern military history.

True, the aftermath of major military operations, especially in Iraq, turned out to be rougher than the Pentagon seems to have expected. Thanks to the guerrilla insurgency mounted by a coalition of intransigent Saddam loyalists, radical Shiite militias, and terrorists imported from Iran and Syria, American soldiers continued to be killed. Nevertheless, by any historical standard—the more than 6,500 who died on D-Day alone in World War II, to cite only one example—our total losses remained amazingly low.

But it was not military matters that aroused the equally sour skepticism of the realists. Their doubts centered, rather, on the issue of whether the Bush Doctrine was politically viable. Most of all, they questioned the idea that democratization represented the best and perhaps even the only

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way to defeat militant Islam and the terrorism it was using as its main weapon against us. Bush had placed his bet on a belief in the universality of the desire for freedom and the prosperity that freedom brought with it. But what if he was wrong? What if the Middle East was incapable of democratization? What if the peoples of that region did not wish to be as free and as prosperous as we were? And what if Islam as a religion was by its very nature incompatible with democracy?

These were hard questions about which reasonable men could and did differ. But those of us who backed Bush's bet had our own set of doubts about the doubts of the realists. They seemed to forget that the Middle East of today had not been created by Allah in the 7th century, and that the miserable despotisms there had not evolved through some inexorable historical process powered entirely by internal cultural forces. Instead, the states in question had all been conjured into existence less than a hundred years ago out of the ruins of the defeated Ottoman empire in World War I. Their boundaries were drawn by the victorious British and French with the stroke of an often arbitrary pen, and their hapless peoples were handed over in due course to one tyrant after another.

Mindful of this history, we backers of the Bush Doctrine wondered why it should have been taken as axiomatic that these states would and/or should last forever in their present forms, and why the political configuration of the Middle East should be eternally immune from the democratizing forces that had been sweeping the rest of the world.

And we wondered, too, whether it could really be true that Muslims were so different from most of their fellow human beings that they liked being pushed around and repressed and beaten and killed by thugs—even if the thugs wore clerical garb or went around quoting from the Quran. We wondered whether Muslims really preferred being poor and hungry and ill-housed to enjoying the comforts and conveniences that we in the West took so totally for granted that we no longer remembered to be grateful for them. And we wondered why, if all this were the case, there had been so great an outburst of relief and happiness among the people of Kabul after we drove out their Taliban oppressors.

YES, CAME the response, but what about the people of Iraq? Most supporters of the invasion—myself included—had predicted that we would be greeted there with flowers and cheers; yet our troops encountered car bombs and hatred. Nevertheless, and contrary to the impression created by the media, survey after survey demonstrated that the vast majority of Iraqis *did* welcome us, and *were* happy to be liberated from the murderous tyranny under which they had lived for so long under Saddam Hussein. The hatred and the car bombs came from the same breed of jihadists who had attacked us on 9/11, and who, unlike the skeptics in our own country, were afraid that we were actually succeeding in democratizing Iraq. Indeed, this was the very warning sent by the terrorist leader Abu Musab al Zarqawi to the remnants of al Qaeda still hunkered down in the caves of Afghanistan: "Democracy is coming, and there will be no excuse thereafter [for terrorism in Iraq]."

Speaking for many of his fellow realists, Fareed Zakaria of *Newsweek* disagreed with al Zarqawi that democracy was coming to Iraq and contended that it was premature to try establishing it there or anywhere else in the Middle East:

> We do not seek democracy in the Middle East—at least not yet. We seek first what might be called the preconditions for democracy . . . the rule of law, individual rights, private property, independent courts, the separation of church and state. . . . We should not assume that what took hundreds of years in the West can happen overnight in the Middle East.

Now, those of us who believed in the Bush Doctrine saw nothing wrong with pursuing Zakaria's agenda. But we rejected the charge—often made not only by realists like Zakaria but also by paleoconservatives like Buchanan—that our position was too "ideological" or naively "idealistic" or even "utopian." We agreed entirely with what the President had long since contended: that the realist alternative of settling for autocratic and despotic regimes in the Middle East had neither brought the regional stability it promised nor—as 9/11 horribly demonstrated—made us safe at home. Bush had also long since given his answer to the question posed by "some who call themselves realists" as to whether "the spread of democracy in the Middle East should be any concern of ours." It was, he affirmed in the strongest terms, a concern of ours precisely because democratization would make us more secure, and he accused the realists of having "lost contact with a fundamental reality" on this point. In this respect, I would argue, Bush was adopting a course akin to the one taken by the Marshall Plan, which had si-

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multaneously served American interests and benefited others. Like the Marshall Plan, his new policy was a synthesis of realism and idealism: a case of doing well by doing good.

Those of us who supported the new policy also took issue with the view that democracy and capitalism could grow only in a soil that had been cultivated for centuries. We reminded the realists that in the aftermath of World War II, the United States managed within a single decade to transform both Nazi Germany and imperial Japan into capitalist democracies. And in the aftermath of the defeat of Communism in World War III, a similar process got under way on its own steam in Central and Eastern Europe, and even in the old heartland of the evil empire itself. Why not the Islamic world? The realist answer was that things were different there. To which our answer was that things were different everywhere, and a thousand reasons to expect the failure of any enterprise could always be conjured up to discourage making an ambitious effort.

To this, in turn, the counter frequently was that the Bush administration had wildly underestimated the special difficulties of democratizing Iraq and had correlatively misjudged the time so great a transformation would take, even assuming it to be possible at all. Yet talk about a "cakewalk" and the like mainly came from outside the administration; and in any event it had been applied to the future military campaign (which definitely did turn out to be a cakewalk), not to the ensuing reconstruction of Iraq. As to the latter, the administration kept repeating that we would stay in Iraq "for as long as it takes and not a day longer." How long would that be? For those who opposed the Bush Doctrine, a year (or even a month?) after the end of major combat operations was already much too much; for those of us who supported it, "as long as it takes and not a day longer" still seemed, given the stakes, the only satisfactory formula.

As with democratization, so with the reform and modernization of Islam. In considering this even more difficult question, we found ourselves asking whether Islam could really go on for all eternity resisting the kind of reformation and modernization that had begun within Christianity and Judaism in the early modern period. Not that we were so naive as to imagine that Islam could be reformed overnight, or from the outside. In its heyday, Islam was able to impose itself on large parts of the world by the sword; there was no chance today of an inverse instant transformation of Islam by the force of American arms.

There was, however, a very good chance that a clearing of the ground, and a sowing of the seeds out of which new political, economic, and social conditions could grow, would gradually give rise to correlative religious pressures from within. Such pressures would take the form of an ultimately irresistible demand on theologians and clerics to find warrants in the Quran and the *sharia* under which it would be possible to remain a good Muslim while enjoying the blessings of decent government, and even of political and economic liberty. In this way a course might finally be set toward the reform and modernization of the Islamic religion itself.

The Democrats of 2004

What I have been trying to say is that the obstacles to a benevolent transformation of the Middle East—whether military, political, or religious—are not insuperable. In the long run they can be overcome, and there can be no question that we possess the power and the means and the resources to work toward their overcoming. But do we have the skills and the stomach to do what will be required? Can we in our present condition play even so limited and so benign an imperial role as we did in occupying Germany and Japan after World War II?

Some of our critics on the European Right sneer at us not, as the Left does, for being imperialists but for being such clumsy ones—for lacking the political dexterity to oversee the emergence of successor governments more amenable to reform and modernization than the despotisms now in place. I confess that I am prey to anxieties about our capabilities, and to others stemming from our character as

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a nation. And in thinking about our long record of inattention and passivity toward terrorism before 9/11, I fear a relapse into appeasement, diplomatic evasion, and ineffectual damage control.

Anxieties and fears like these were given a great boost by the attacks on the Bush Doctrine that became so poisonous in the 2004 presidential primary campaigns of the Democratic party. I have already told of my early apprehensions about the potential spread of the antiwar movement from the margins to the center, and my subsequent amazement in watching it go so far so fast. Whereas it took twelve years for the radicals I addressed in that drafty union hall in 1960 to capture the Democratic party behind George McGovern, their political and spiritual heirs of 2001 seemed to be pulling off the same trick in less than two. This time their leader of choice was the raucously antiwar Howard Dean. Though he eventually failed to win the nomination, his early successes frightened most of the relatively moderate candidates into a sharp leftward turn on Iraq, and drove out the few who supported the campaign there. As for John Kerry, in order to win the nomination, he had to disavow the vote he had cast authorizing the President to use force against Saddam Hussein.

To make matters worse, the campaign to discredit the action in Iraq moved from the hustings into the halls of Congress, where it wore the camouflage of a series of allegedly nonpartisan hearings. In these hearings, the most prominent of which was held by the Senate Intelligence Committee, high officials of the Bush administration were hectored by Democratic legislators (and even a few Republicans) in terms that often came close to sounding like the many articles and books in circulation that were accusing the President of having lied to us in going after Saddam Hussein. This was no slow process of trickle-down; this was an instantaneous inundation of the whole political landscape.

Among the lies through which Bush supposedly misled John Kerry and everyone else was that there might have been some connection between Saddam and al Qaeda. Now, even those of us who believed in such a connection were willing to admit that the evidence was not (yet) definitive; but this was a far cry from denying that there was any basis for it at all.[10] So far a cry, that according to the reports that would be issued both by the Senate Intelligence Committee and the 9/11 Commission in the summer of 2004 (and contrary to how their conclusions would be interpreted in the media), al Qaeda did in fact have a cooperative, if informal, relationship with Iraqi agents working under Saddam.[11]

It was the same with another of the lies Bush allegedly told to justify the invasion of Iraq. In his State of the Union address of 2003, he said that "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." Then an obscure retired diplomat named Joseph C. Wilson IV, who had earlier been sent to Niger by the CIA to check out this claim, earned his 15 minutes of fame—not to mention a best-selling book—by loudly denouncing this assertion as a lie. But it would in due course be established that every one of the notorious "sixteen words" Bush had uttered was true. This was the consensus of the Senate Intelligence Committee report, two separate British investigations, and a variety of European intelligence agencies, including even the French.[12] Not only that, but it turned out that Wilson's own report to the CIA had tended to *confirm* the suspicion that Saddam had been shopping for uranium in Africa, and not, as he went around declaring, to debunk it.[13] The liar here, then, was not Bush but Wilson.

BUT OF course the biggest lie Bush was charged with telling was that Saddam possessed weapons of mass destruction. On this issue, too, those of us who still suspected that the WMD remained hidden, or that they had been shipped to Syria, or both, were willing to admit that we might well be wrong. But how could Bush have been *lying* when every intelligence agency in every country in the world was convinced that Saddam maintained an arsenal of such weapons? And how could Bush have "hyped" or exaggerated the reports he was given by our own intelligence agencies when the director of the CIA himself described the case as a "slam dunk"?

To be sure, again according to the Senate Intelligence Committee report, the case, far from being

[10] Stephen F. Hayes has done especially good work on this issue, both in a series of articles in the *Weekly Standard* and in his book *The Connection: How al Qaeda's Collaboration with Saddam Hussein Has Endangered America*.

[11] Additional corroboration of "meetings . . . between senior Iraqi representatives and senior al Qaeda operatives" would come from a comparable British investigation conducted by Lord Butler, whose report would be released around the same time as the Senate Intelligence Committee.

[12] From the Butler Report: "We conclude also that the statement in President Bush's State of the Union Address of 28 January 2003 that 'The British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa' was well-founded."

[13] From the Senate Intelligence Committee Report: "He [the CIA reports officer] said he judged that the most important fact in the report [by Wilson] was that Nigerian officials admitted that the Iraqi delegation had traveled there in 1999, and that the Nigerian prime minister believed the Iraqis were interested in purchasing uranium, because this provided some confirmation of foreign government service reporting."

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a "slam dunk," actually rested on weak or faulty evidence. Yet the committee itself "did not find any evidence that administration officials attempted to coerce, influence, or pressure analysts to change their judgments related to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities." The CIA, that is, did not tell the President what it thought he wanted to hear. It told him what it thought it knew; and what it told him, he had every reason to believe.[14]

In the wake of the WMD issue, several others emerged that did even more to shake the confidence of some who had been enthusiastic supporters of the operation in Iraq. On top of the mounting number of American soldiers being killed as they were trying to bring security to Iraq, and on the heels of the horrendous episodes of the murder and desecration of the bodies of four American contractors in Falluja, came the revelation that Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib had been subjected to ugly mistreatment by their American captors.

Among supporters of the Bush Doctrine, these setbacks set off a great wave of defeatist gloom that was deepened by the nervous tactical shifts they produced in our military planners (such as the decision to hold back from cleaning out the terrorist militias hiding in and behind holy places in Falluja and Najaf). Even the formerly unshakable Fouad Ajami was shaken. In a piece entitled "Iraq May Survive, But the Dream is Dead," he wrote: "Let's face it: Iraq is not going to be America's showcase in the Arab-Muslim world."

That the antiwar party would batten on all this—and would continue ignoring the enormous progress we had made in the reconstruction of Iraqi society—was only to be expected. It was also only natural for the Democrats to take as much political advantage of the setbacks as they could. But it was not necessarily to be expected that the Democrats would seize just as eagerly as the radicals upon every piece of bad news as another weapon in the war against the war. Nor was it necessarily to be expected that mainstream Democratic politicians would go so far off the intellectual and moral rails as to compare the harassment and humiliation of the prisoners in Abu Ghraib—none of whom, so far as anyone then knew, was even maimed, let alone killed—to the horrendous torturing and murdering that had gone on in that same prison under Saddam Hussein or, even more outlandishly, to the Soviet gulag in which many millions of prisoners died.

Yet this was what Edward M. Kennedy did on the floor of the Senate, where he declared that the torture chamber of Saddam Hussein had been reopened "under new management—U.S. management," and this was what Al Gore did when he accused Bush of "establishing an American gulag." Joining with the politicians was the main financial backer of the Democratic party's presidential campaign, George Soros, who actually said that Abu Ghraib was even worse than the attack of 9/11. On the platform with Soros when he made this morally disgusting statement was Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, who let it go by without a peep of protest.

Equally ignominious was the response of mainstream Democrats to the most effective demagogic exfoliation of the antiwar radicals, Michael Moore's film *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Shortly after 9/11—that is, long before the appearance of this movie but with many of its charges against Bush already on vivid display in Moore's public statements about Afghanistan—one liberal commentator had described him as a "well-known crank, regarded with considerable distaste even on the Left." The same commentator (shades of how the "jackal bins" of yore were regarded) had also dismissed as "preposterous" the idea that Moore's views "represent a significant body of antiwar opinion." Lending a measure of plausibility to this assessment was the fact that Moore elicited a few boos when, in accepting an Academy Award for *Bowling for Columbine* in 2003, he declared:

> We live in the time where we have fictitious election results that elect a fictitious president. We live in a time where we have a man sending us to war for fictitious reasons. . . . [W]e are against this war, Mr. Bush. Shame on you, Mr. Bush, shame on you.

By 2004, however, when *Fahrenheit 9/11* came out, things had changed. True, this movie—a compendium of every scurrility ever hurled at George W. Bush, and a few new ones besides, all gleefully stitched together in the best conspiratorial traditions of the "paranoid style in American politics"—did manage to embarrass even several liberal commentators. One of them described the film as a product of the "loony Left," and feared that its extremism might discredit the "legitimate" case against Bush and the war. Yet in an amazing reversal of the normal pattern in the distribution of prudence, such fears of extremism were more pronounced among liberal pundits than among mainstream Democratic politicians.

[14] Going even further than the Senate Intelligence Committee, the Butler Report concluded: "We believe that it would be a rash person who asserted at this stage that evidence of Iraqi possession of stocks of biological or chemical agents, or even of banned missiles, does not exist or will never be found."

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Thus, so many leading Democrats flocked to a screening of *Fahrenheit 9/11* in Washington that (as the columnist Mark Steyn quipped) the business of Congress had to be put on hold; and when the screening was over, nary a dissonant boo disturbed the harmony of the ensuing ovation. The chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Terry McAuliffe, pronounced the film "very powerful, much more powerful than I thought it would be." Then, when asked by CNN whether he thought "the movie was essentially fair and factually based," McAuliffe answered, "I do. . . . Clearly the movie makes it clear that George Bush is not fit to be President of this country." Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa seconded McAuliffe and urged all Americans to see the film: "It's important for the American people to understand what has gone on before, what led us to this point, and to see it sort of in this unvarnished presentation by Michael Moore."

Possibly some of the other important Democrats who attended the screening—including Senators Tom Daschle, Max Baucus, Barbara Boxer, and Bill Nelson; Congressmen Charles Rangel, Henry Waxman, and Jim McDermott; and elders of the party like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Theodore Sorensen—disagreed with Harkin and McAuliffe. But if so, they remained remarkably quiet about it.

As for John Kerry himself, he did not take time out to see *Fahrenheit 9/11*, explaining that there was no need since he had "lived it."

2004 and 1952

RETURNING NOW to the gloom that afflicted supporters of the Bush Doctrine in the spring of 2004: one of the reasons Fouad Ajami gave for it was that "our enemies have taken our measure; they have taken stock of our national discord over the war." Emboldened by our restraint in Falluja and elsewhere within Iraq, as well as by our concomitant willingness to bring the UN back into the political picture, our enemies had begun to breathe easier—and not only in Iraq:

> Once the administration talked of a "Greater Middle East" where the "deficits" of freedom, knowledge, and women's empowerment would be tackled, where our power would be used to erode the entrenched despotisms in the Arab-Muslim world.

But now, Ajami lamented, it had become clear that "we shall not chase the Syrian dictator to a spider hole, nor will we sack the Iranian theocracy." There were even indications that, abandoning the dream of democracy altogether, we might settle for the rule of a "strong man" in Iraq.

But how accurate was the measure our enemies had taken of us? Was it possible that their gauge was being thrown off by the overheated atmosphere of a more than usually bitter presidential campaign, and by the caution George Bush felt it necessary to adopt in seeking reelection?

This seemed to me then, and it still seems to me now, the most decisive question of all. I therefore want to conclude by examining it, and I want to do so by returning to the analogy I drew earlier between the start of World War III in 1947 and the start of World War IV in 2001.

When the Truman Doctrine was enunciated in 1947, it was attacked from several different directions. On the Right, there were the isolationists who—after being sidelined by World War II—had made something of a comeback in the Republican party under the leadership of Senator Robert Taft. Their complaint was that Truman had committed the United States to endless interventions that had no clear bearing on our national interest. But there was also another faction on the Right that denounced containment not as recklessly ambitious but as too timid. This group was still small, but within the next few years it would find spokesmen in Republican political figures like Richard Nixon and John Foster Dulles and conservative intellectuals like William F. Buckley, Jr. and James Burnham.

At the other end of the political spectrum, there

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were the Communists and their "liberal" fellow travelers who—strengthened by our alliance with the Soviet Union in World War II—had emerged as a relatively sizable group and would soon form a new political party behind Henry Wallace. In their view, the Soviets had more cause to defend themselves against us than we had to defend ourselves against them, and it was Truman, not Stalin, who posed the greater danger to "free peoples everywhere." But criticism also came from the political center, as represented by Walter Lippmann, the most influential and most prestigious commentator of the period. Lippmann argued that Truman had sounded "the tocsin of an ideological crusade" that was nothing less than messianic in its scope.

In the election of 1948, Truman had the seemingly impossible task of confronting all three of these challenges (and a few others as well). When, against what every poll had predicted, he succeeded in warding them off, he could reasonably claim a mandate for his foreign policy. And so it came about that, under the aegis of the Truman Doctrine, American troops were sent off in 1950 to fight in Korea. "What a nation can do or must do," Truman would later write, "begins with the willingness and the ability of its people to shoulder the burden," and Truman was rightly confident that the American people were willing to shoulder the burden of Korea.

Even so, enough bitter opposition remained within and around the Republican party to leave it uncertain as to whether containment was an *American* policy or only the policy of the Democrats. This uncertainty was exacerbated by the presidential election of 1952, when the Republicans behind Dwight D. Eisenhower ran against Truman's hand-picked successor Adlai Stevenson in a campaign featuring strident attacks on the Truman Doctrine by Eisenhower's running mate Richard Nixon and his future Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Nixon, for example, mocked Stevenson as a graduate of the "Cowardly College of Communist Containment" run by Truman's Secretary of State Dean Acheson, while Dulles repeatedly called for ditching containment in favor of a policy of "rollback" and "liberation." And both Nixon and Dulles strongly signaled their endorsement of General Douglas MacArthur's insistence that Truman was wrong to settle for holding the line in Korea instead of going all the way—or, as MacArthur had famously put it, "There is no substitute for victory."

Yet when Eisenhower came into office, he hardly touched a hair on the head of the Truman Doctrine. Far from adopting a bolder and more aggressive strategy, the new President ended the Korean war on the basis of the status quo ante—in other words, precisely on the terms of containment. Even more telling was Eisenhower's refusal three years later to intervene when the Hungarians, apparently encouraged by the rhetoric of liberation still being employed in the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe, rose up in revolt against their Soviet masters. For better or worse, this finally dispelled any lingering doubt as to whether containment was the policy just of the Democratic party. With full bipartisan support behind it, the Truman Doctrine had become the official policy of the United States of America.

The analogy is obviously not perfect, but the resemblances between the political battles of 1952 and those of 2004 are striking enough to help us in thinking about what a few moments ago I called the most decisive of all the questions now facing the United States. To frame the question in slightly different terms from the ones I originally used: what will happen if the Democrats behind John Kerry defeat George W. Bush in November? Will they follow through on their violent denunciations of Bush's policy, or will they, like the Republicans of 1952 with respect to Korea, quietly forget their campaign promises of reliance on the UN and the Europeans, and continue on much the same course as Bush has followed in Iraq? And looking beyond Iraq itself, will they do unto the Bush Doctrine as the Republicans of 1952 did unto the Truman Doctrine? Will they treat Iraq as only one battle in the larger war—World War IV—into which 9/11 plunged us? Will they resolve to go on fighting that war with the strategy adumbrated by the Bush Doctrine, and for as long as it may take to win it?

From the way the Democrats have been acting and speaking, I fear that the answer is no. Nor was I reassured by the flamboyant display of hawkishness they put on at their national convention in July. Yet as a passionate supporter of the Bush Doctrine I pray that I am wrong about this. If John Kerry should become our next President, and he may, it would be a great calamity if he were to abandon the Bush Doctrine in favor of the law-enforcement approach through which we dealt so ineffectually with terrorism before 9/11, while leaving the rest to those weakest of reeds, the UN and the Europeans. No matter how he might dress up such a shift, it would—rightly—be interpreted by our enemies as a craven retreat, and dire consequences would ensue. Once again the despotisms

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of the Middle East would feel free to offer sanctuary and launching pads to Islamic terrorists; once again these terrorists would have the confidence to attack us—and this time on an infinitely greater scale than before.

If, however, the victorious Democrats were quietly to recognize that our salvation will come neither from the Europeans nor from the UN, and if they were to accept that the Bush Doctrine represents the only adequate response to the great threat that was literally brought home to us on 9/11, then our enemies would no longer be emboldened—certainly not to the extent they have recently been—by "our national discord over the war."

In World War III, despite the bipartisan consensus that became apparent after 1952 (and contrary to the roseate reminiscences of how it was then), plenty of "discord" remained, and there were plenty of missteps—most notably involving Vietnam—along the way to victory. There were also moments when it looked as though we were losing, and when our enemies seemed so strong that the best we could do was in effect to sue for a negotiated peace.

Now, with World War IV barely begun, a similar dynamic is already at work. In World War III, we as a nation persisted in spite of the inevitable setbacks and mistakes and the defeatism they generated, until, in the end, we won. To us the reward of victory was the elimination of a military, political, and ideological threat. To the people living both within the Soviet Union itself and in its East European empire, it brought liberation from a totalitarian tyranny. Admittedly, liberation did not mean that everything immediately came up roses, but it would be foolish to contend that nothing changed for the better when Communism landed on the very ash heap of history that Marx had predicted would be the final resting place of capitalism.

Suppose that we hang in long enough to carry World War IV to a comparably successful conclusion. What will victory mean this time around? Well, to us it will mean the elimination of another, and in some respects greater, threat to our safety and security. But because that threat cannot be eliminated without "draining the swamps" in which it breeds, victory will also entail the liberation of another group of countries from another species of totalitarian tyranny. As we can already see from Afghanistan and Iraq, liberation will no more result in the overnight establishment of ideal conditions in the Middle East than it has done in East Europe. But as we can also see from Afghanistan and Iraq, better things will immediately happen, and a genuine opportunity will be opened up for even better things to come.

THE MEMORY of how it was toward the end of World War III suggests another intriguing parallel with how it is now in the early days of World War IV. We have learned from the testimony of former officials of the Soviet Union that, unlike the elites here, who heaped scorn on Ronald Reagan's idea that a viable system of missile defense could be built, the Russians (including their best scientists) had no doubt that the United States could and would succeed in creating such a system and that this would do them in. Today the same kind of scorn is heaped by the same kind of people on George W. Bush's idea that the Middle East can be democratized, while our enemies in the region—like the Russians with respect to "Star Wars"—believe that we are actually succeeding.

One indication is the warning to this effect issued by al Zarqawi to al Qaeda, from which I have already quoted. But his letter is not the only sign that the secular despots and the Islamofascists in the Middle East are deeply worried over what the Bush Doctrine holds in store for them. There is Libya's Qaddafi, who has admitted that it was his anxiety about "being next" that induced him to give up his nuclear program. And there are the Syrians and the Iranians. Of course they keep making defiant noises and they keep trying to create as much trouble for us as possible, but with all due respect to the disappointed expectations of Fouad Ajami, I have to ask: why would they be sending jihadists and weapons into Iraq if not in a desperate last-ditch campaign to derail a process whose prospects are in their judgment only too fair and whose repercussions they fear are only too likely to send them flying?

This fear may, as Ajami says, have been tempered by our response to the troubles they themselves have been causing us. But it cannot have been altogether assuaged, since it is solidly grounded in the new geostrategic realities in their region that have been created under the aegis of the Bush Doctrine. Professor Haim Harari, a former president of the Weizmann Institute, describes these realities succinctly:

> Now that Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya are out, two-and-a-half terrorist states remain: Iran, Syria, and Lebanon, the latter being a Syrian colony. . . . As a result of the conquest

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> of Afghanistan and Iraq, both Iran and Syria are now totally surrounded by territories unfriendly to them. Iran is encircled by Afghanistan, by the Gulf States, Iraq, and the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union. Syria is surrounded by Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, and Israel. This is a significant strategic change and it applies strong pressure on the terrorist countries. It is not surprising that Iran is so active in trying to incite a Shiite uprising in Iraq. I do not know if the American plan was actually to encircle both Iran and Syria, but that is the resulting situation.

Finally, there is the effect the Bush Doctrine has had on the forces pushing for liberalization throughout the Middle East. When Ronald Reagan used the word "evil" in speaking of the Soviet Union, and even confidently predicted its demise, he gave new hope to democratic dissidents in and out of the gulag. Back then, very much like Ajami on Bush, some of us fell into near despair when Reagan failed to act in full accordance with his own convictions. When, for example, he responded tepidly to the great Polish crisis of 1982 that culminated in the imposition of martial law, the columnist George F. Will, one of his staunchest supporters, angrily declared that the administration headed by Reagan "loved commerce more than it loathed Communism," and I wrote an article expressing "anguish" over his foreign policy. Yet even though (once more like Ajami today) our criticisms were mostly right in detail, we were proved wondrously wrong about the eventual outcome. It was different with the dissidents behind the Iron Curtain. They knew better than to get stuck on tactical details, and they never once lost heart.

So it has been with the Bush Doctrine. Bush has made reform and democratization the talk of the entire Middle East. Where before there was only silence, now there are countless articles and speeches and conferences, and even sermons, dedicated to the cause of political and religious liberalization and exploring ways to bring it about. Like the dissidents behind the Iron Curtain in the 1980's, the democratizers in the Middle East today evidently remain undiscouraged. Falluja and the rest notwithstanding, there has been, if anything, a steady increase in the volume and range of the reformist talk that was and continues to be inspired by the Bush Doctrine.[15]

I do not wish to exaggerate. Except in Iran, and perhaps also one or two other non-Arab Muslim states, the democratizers are still a relatively small group, and as yet their ranks seem to contain no one comparable in intellectual stature or moral and political influence to Sakharov or Solzhenitsyn or Sharansky. But the editor of the *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Barry Rubin, who has generally been very skeptical about the chances for democratization in the region, offers a cautious assessment that seems reasonable to me:

> Democracy and reform are on the Arab world's agenda. It will be a long, uphill fight to bring change to those countries, but at least a process has begun. Liberals remain few and weak; the dictatorships are strong and the Islamist threat will discourage openness or innovation. Still, at least there are more people trying to move things in the right direction.

To which I (though not Rubin) would add, thanks to George W. Bush.

Then there is Gaza, where at least some elements of the fabled Palestinian street have for the very first time exploded with denunciations not of Israel or the United States, but of Yasir Arafat's tyrannical and corrupt rule. For the first time, too, we find articles in the Arab press calling for Arafat's removal—in favor not of the Islamist alternative represented by Hamas but of a different kind of leadership.

Here, for example, is the *Jordan Times*:

> The rapid deterioration of the domestic political order in Gaza mirrors similar dilemmas that plague most of the Arab world, revolving around the tendency of small power elites or single men to monopolize political and economic power in their hands via their direct, personal control of domestic security and police systems. Gaza is yet another warning about the failure of the modern Arab security state and the need for a better brand of statehood based on law-based citizen rights rather than gun-based regime protection and perpetual incumbency.

And here is the *Arab Times* of Kuwait:

> Arafat should quit his position because he is the head of a corrupt authority. Arafat has destroyed Palestine. He has led it to terrorism, death, and a hopeless situation.

And there is this, from the *Gulf News* in Dubai:

> Palestinians are saying their president for life—Arafat—is the problem along with his cronies who rule them, rob them, and impoverish them.

[15] A representative sample can be found on the website of the Middle East Media Research Institute (http://www.memri.org/reform.html).

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> Arabs have a responsibility here too. They can say "Israel" until they are all blue in the face, but it does not change the fact that a large part of the fault lies with the Palestinians and the Arabs.

According to a Palestinian legislator quoted by the *Washington Post*, "what is happening in the streets of Gaza has [nothing] to do with reform. It's a simple power struggle." By contrast, the Iranian-born commentator Amir Taheri sees it as a new kind of "intifada aimed at bringing down yet another Arab tyranny." Chances are that there is some truth in both of these opposing judgments, and in any event it is still too early to tell how the turmoil in Gaza will play itself out. But it is surely not too early to say that there would have been no uprising against Arafat, and much less talk about reform, if not for George W. Bush's policies combined with his courageous willingness to back those of Ariel Sharon.

History's Call

IN HIS first State of the Union address, President Bush affirmed that *history* had called America to action, and that it was both "our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom's fight"—a fight he also characterized as "a unique opportunity for us to seize." Only last May, he reminded us that "We did not seek this war on terror," but, having been sought out by it, we responded, and now we were trying to meet the "great demands" that "history has placed on our country."

In this language, and especially in the repeated references to history, we can hear an echo of the concluding paragraphs of George F. Kennan's "X" essay, written at the outbreak of World War III:

> The issue of Soviet-American relations is in essence a test of the overall worth of the United States as a nation among nations. To avoid destruction the United States need only measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation as a great nation.

Kennan then went on to his peroration:

> In the light of these circumstances, the thoughtful observer of Russian-American relations will experience a certain gratitude for a Providence which, by providing the American people with this implacable challenge, has made their entire security as a nation dependent on their pulling themselves together and accepting the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear.

Substitute "Islamic terrorism" for "Russian-American relations," and every other word of this magnificent statement applies to us as a nation today. In 1947, we accepted the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history "plainly intended" us to bear, and for the next 42 years we acted on them. We may not always have acted on them wisely or well, and we often did so only after much kicking and screaming. But act on them we did. We thereby ensured our own "preservation as a great nation," while also bringing a better life to millions upon millions of people in a major region of the world.

Now "our entire security as a nation"—including, to a greater extent than in 1947, our physical security—once more depends on whether we are ready and willing to accept and act upon the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history has yet again so squarely placed upon our shoulders. Are we ready? Are we willing? I think we are, but the jury is still out, and will not return a final verdict until well after the election of 2004.

—August 2, 2004

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Were American Indians the Victims of Genocide?

Guenter Lewy

On September 21, the National Museum of the American Indian will open its doors. In an interview early this year, the museum's founding director, W. Richard West, declared that the new institution would not shy away from such difficult subjects as the effort to eradicate American-Indian culture in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is a safe bet that someone will also, inevitably, raise the issue of genocide.

The story of the encounter between European settlers and America's native population does not make for pleasant reading. Among early accounts, perhaps the most famous is Helen Hunt Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor* (1888), a doleful recitation of forced removals, killings, and callous disregard. Jackson's book, which clearly captured some essential elements of what happened, also set a pattern of exaggeration and one-sided indictment that has persisted to this day.

Thus, according to Ward Churchill, a professor of ethnic studies at the University of Colorado, the reduction of the North American Indian population from an estimated 12 million in 1500 to barely 237,000 in 1900 represents a "vast genocide . . . , the most sustained on record." By the end of the 19th century, writes David E. Stannard, a historian at the University of Hawaii, native Americans had undergone the "worst human holocaust the world had ever witnessed, roaring across two continents non-stop for four centuries and consuming the lives of countless tens of millions of people." In the judgment of Lenore A. Stiffarm and Phil Lane, Jr., "there can be no more monumental example of sustained genocide—certainly none involving a 'race' of people as broad and complex as this—anywhere in the annals of human history."

The sweeping charge of genocide against the Indians became especially popular during the Vietnam war, when historians opposed to that conflict began drawing parallels between our actions in Southeast Asia and earlier examples of a supposedly ingrained American viciousness toward non-white peoples. The historian Richard Drinnon, referring to the troops under the command of the Indian scout Kit Carson, called them "forerunners of the Burning Fifth Marines" who set fire to Vietnamese villages, while in *The American Indian: The First Victim* (1972), Jay David urged contemporary readers to recall how America's civilization had originated in "theft and murder" and "efforts toward . . . genocide."

Further accusations of genocide marked the run-up to the 1992 quincentenary of the landing of Columbus. The National Council of Churches adopted a resolution branding this event "an invasion" that resulted in the "slavery and genocide of native people." In a widely read book, *The Con-*

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quest of Paradise (1990), Kirkpatrick Sale charged the English and their American successors with pursuing a policy of extermination that had continued unabated for four centuries. Later works have followed suit. In the 1999 *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, edited by the scholar Israel Charny, an article by Ward Churchill argues that extermination was the "express objective" of the U.S. government. To the Cambodia expert Ben Kiernan, similarly, genocide is the "only appropriate way" to describe how white settlers treated the Indians. And so forth.

That American Indians suffered horribly is indisputable. But whether their suffering amounted to a "holocaust," or to genocide, is another matter.

II

IT IS A firmly established fact that a mere 250,000 native Americans were still alive in the territory of the United States at the end of the 19th century. Still in scholarly contention, however, is the number of Indians alive at the time of first contact with Europeans. Some students of the subject speak of an inflated "numbers game"; others charge that the size of the aboriginal population has been deliberately minimized in order to make the decline seem less severe than it was.

The disparity in estimates is enormous. In 1928, the ethnologist James Mooney proposed a total count of 1,152,950 Indians in all tribal areas north of Mexico at the time of the European arrival. By 1987, in *American Indian Holocaust and Survival*, Russell Thornton was giving a figure of well over 5 million, nearly five times as high as Mooney's, while Lenore Stiffarm and Phil Lane, Jr. suggested a total of 12 million. That figure rested in turn on the work of the anthropologist Henry Dobyns, who in 1983 had estimated the aboriginal population of North America as a whole at 18 million and of the present territory of the United States at about 10 million.

From one perspective, these differences, however startling, may seem beside the point: there is ample evidence, after all, that the arrival of the white man triggered a drastic reduction in the number of native Americans. Nevertheless, even if the higher figures are credited, they alone do not prove the occurrence of genocide.

To address this issue properly we must begin with the most important *reason* for the Indians' catastrophic decline—namely, the spread of highly contagious diseases to which they had no immunity. This phenomenon is known by scholars as a "virgin-soil epidemic"; in North America, it was the norm.

The most lethal of the pathogens introduced by the Europeans was smallpox, which sometimes incapacitated so many adults at once that deaths from hunger and starvation ran as high as deaths from disease; in several cases, entire tribes were rendered extinct. Other killers included measles, influenza, whooping cough, diphtheria, typhus, bubonic plague, cholera, and scarlet fever. Although syphilis was apparently native to parts of the Western hemisphere, it, too, was probably introduced into North America by Europeans.

About all this there is no essential disagreement. The most hideous enemy of native Americans was not the white man and his weaponry, concludes Alfred Crosby, "but the invisible killers which those men brought in their blood and breath." It is thought that between 75 to 90 percent of all Indian deaths resulted from these killers.

To some, however, this is enough in itself to warrant the term genocide. David Stannard, for instance, states that just as Jews who died of disease and starvation in the ghettos are counted among the victims of the Holocaust, Indians who died of introduced diseases "were as much the victims of the Euro-American genocidal war as were those burned or stabbed or hacked or shot to death, or devoured by hungry dogs." As an example of actual genocidal conditions, Stannard points to Franciscan missions in California as "furnaces of death."

But right away we are in highly debatable territory. It is true that the cramped quarters of the missions, with their poor ventilation and bad sanitation, encouraged the spread of disease. But it is demonstrably untrue that, like the Nazis, the missionaries were unconcerned with the welfare of their native converts. No matter how difficult the conditions under which the Indians labored—obligatory work, often inadequate food and medical care, corporal punishment—their experience bore no comparison with the fate of the Jews in the ghettos. The missionaries had a poor understanding of the causes of the diseases that afflicted their charges, and medically there was little they could do for them. By contrast, the Nazis knew exactly what was happening in the ghettos, and quite deliberately deprived the inmates of both food and medicine; unlike in Stannard's "furnaces of death," the deaths that occurred there were *meant* to occur.

The larger picture also does not conform to Stannard's idea of disease as an expression of "genocidal war." True, the forced relocations of Indian tribes were often accompanied by great hardship and harsh treatment; the removal of the Cherokee from their homelands to territories west of the Mississippi in

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1838 took the lives of thousands and has entered history as the Trail of Tears. But the largest loss of life occurred well before this time, and sometimes after only minimal contact with European traders. True, too, some colonists later welcomed the high mortality among Indians, seeing it as a sign of divine providence; that, however, does not alter the basic fact that Europeans did not come to the New World in order to infect the natives with deadly diseases.

OR DID THEY? Ward Churchill, taking the argument a step further than Stannard, asserts that there was nothing unwitting or unintentional about the way the great bulk of North America's native population disappeared: "it was precisely malice, not nature, that did the deed." In brief, the Europeans were engaged in biological warfare.

Unfortunately for this thesis, we know of but a single instance of such warfare, and the documentary evidence is inconclusive. In 1763, a particularly serious uprising threatened the British garrisons west of the Allegheny mountains. Worried about his limited resources, and disgusted by what he saw as the Indians' treacherous and savage modes of warfare, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, commander-in-chief of British forces in North America, wrote as follows to Colonel Henry Bouquet at Fort Pitt: "You will do well to try to inoculate the Indians [with smallpox] by means of blankets, as well as to try every other method, that can serve to extirpate this execrable race."

Bouquet clearly approved of Amherst's suggestion, but whether he himself carried it out is uncertain. On or around June 24, two traders at Fort Pitt did give blankets and a handkerchief from the fort's quarantined hospital to two visiting Delaware Indians, and one of the traders noted in his journal: "I hope it will have the desired effect." Smallpox was already present among the tribes of Ohio; at some point after this episode, there was another outbreak in which hundreds died.

A second, even less substantiated instance of alleged biological warfare concerns an incident that occurred on June 20, 1837. On that day, Churchill writes, the U.S. Army began to dispense "'trade blankets' to Mandans and other Indians gathered at Fort Clark on the Missouri River in present-day North Dakota." He continues:

> Far from being trade goods, the blankets had been taken from a military infirmary in St. Louis quarantined for smallpox, and brought upriver aboard the steamboat *St. Peter's*. When the first Indians showed symptoms of the disease on July 14, the post surgeon advised those camped near the post to scatter and seek "sanctuary" in the villages of healthy relatives.

In this way the disease was spread, the Mandans were "virtually exterminated," and other tribes suffered similarly devastating losses. Citing a figure of "100,000 or more fatalities" caused by the U.S. Army in the 1836-40 smallpox pandemic (elsewhere he speaks of a toll "several times that number"), Churchill refers the reader to Thornton's *American Indian Holocaust and Survival.*

Supporting Churchill here are Stiffarm and Lane, who write that "the distribution of smallpox-infected blankets by the U.S. Army to Mandans at Fort Clark . . . was the causative factor in the pandemic of 1836-40." In evidence, they cite the journal of a contemporary at Fort Clark, Francis A. Chardon.

But Chardon's journal manifestly does not suggest that the U.S. Army distributed infected blankets, instead blaming the epidemic on the inadvertent spread of disease by a ship's passenger. And as for the "100,000 fatalities," not only does Thornton fail to allege such obviously absurd numbers, but he too points to infected passengers on the steamboat *St. Peter's* as the cause. Another scholar, drawing on newly discovered source material, has also refuted the idea of a conspiracy to harm the Indians.

Similarly at odds with any such idea is the effort of the United States government at this time to vaccinate the native population. Smallpox vaccination, a procedure developed by the English country doctor Edward Jenner in 1796, was first ordered in 1801 by President Jefferson; the program continued in force for three decades, though its implementation was slowed both by the resistance of the Indians, who suspected a trick, and by lack of interest on the part of some officials. Still, as Thornton writes: "Vaccination of American Indians did eventually succeed in reducing mortality from smallpox."

To sum up, European settlers came to the New World for a variety of reasons, but the thought of infecting the Indians with deadly pathogens was not one of them. As for the charge that the U.S. government should itself be held responsible for the demographic disaster that overtook the American-Indian population, it is unsupported by evidence or legitimate argument. The United States did not wage biological warfare against the Indians; neither can the large number of deaths as a result of disease be considered the result of a genocidal design.

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III

STILL, EVEN if up to 90 percent of the reduction in Indian population was the result of disease, that leaves a sizable death toll caused by mistreatment and violence. Should some or all of these deaths be considered instances of genocide?

We may examine representative incidents by following the geographic route of European settlement, beginning in the New England colonies. There, at first, the Puritans did not regard the Indians they encountered as natural enemies, but rather as potential friends and converts. But their Christianizing efforts showed little success, and their experience with the natives gradually yielded a more hostile view. The Pequot tribe in particular, with its reputation for cruelty and ruthlessness, was feared not only by the colonists but by most other Indians in New England. In the warfare that eventually ensued, caused in part by intertribal rivalries, the Narragansett Indians became actively engaged on the Puritan side.

Hostilities opened in late 1636 after the murder of several colonists. When the Pequots refused to comply with the demands of the Massachusetts Bay Colony for the surrender of the guilty and other forms of indemnification, a punitive expedition was led against them by John Endecott, the first resident governor of the colony; although it ended inconclusively, the Pequots retaliated by attacking any settler they could find. Fort Saybrook on the Connecticut River was besieged, and members of the garrison who ventured outside were ambushed and killed. One captured trader, tied to a stake in sight of the fort, was tortured for three days, expiring after his captors flayed his skin with the help of hot timbers and cut off his fingers and toes. Another prisoner was roasted alive.

The torture of prisoners was indeed routine practice for most Indian tribes, and was deeply ingrained in Indian culture. Valuing bravery above all things, the Indians had little sympathy for those who surrendered or were captured. Prisoners. unable to withstand the rigor of wilderness travel were usually killed on the spot. Among those—Indian or European—taken back to the village, some would be adopted to replace slain warriors, the rest subjected to a ritual of torture designed to humiliate them and exact atonement for the tribe's losses. Afterward the Indians often consumed the body or parts of it in a ceremonial meal, and proudly displayed scalps and fingers as trophies of victory.

Despite the colonists' own resort to torture in order to extract confessions, the cruelty of these practices strengthened the belief that the natives were savages who deserved no quarter. This revulsion accounts at least in part for the ferocity of the battle of Fort Mystic in May 1637, when a force commanded by John Mason and assisted by militiamen from Saybrook surprised about half of the Pequot tribe encamped near the Mystic River.

The intention of the colonists had been to kill the warriors "with their Swords," as Mason put it, to plunder the village, and to capture the women and children. But the plan did not work out. About 150 Pequot warriors had arrived in the fort the night before, and when the surprise attack began they emerged from their tents to fight. Fearing the Indians' numerical strength, the English attackers set fire to the fortified village and retreated outside the palisades. There they formed a circle and shot down anyone seeking to escape; a second cordon of Narragansett Indians cut down the few who managed to get through the English line. When the battle was over, the Pequots had suffered several hundred dead, perhaps as many as 300 of these being women and children. Twenty Narragansett warriors also fell.

A number of recent historians have charged the Puritans with genocide: that is, with having carried out a premeditated plan to exterminate the Pequots. The evidence belies this. The use of fire as a weapon of war was not unusual for either Europeans or Indians, and every contemporary account stresses that the burning of the fort was an act of self-protection, not part of a pre-planned massacre. In later stages of the Pequot war, moreover, the colonists spared women, children, and the elderly, further contradicting the idea of genocidal intention.

A SECOND FAMOUS example from the colonial period is King Philip's War (1675-76). This conflict, proportionately the costliest of all American wars, took the life of one in every sixteen men of military age in the colonies; large numbers of women and children also perished or were carried into captivity. Fifty-two of New England's 90 towns were attacked, seventeen were razed to the ground, and 25 were pillaged. Casualties among the Indians were even higher, with many of those captured being executed or sold into slavery abroad.

The war was also merciless, on both sides. At its outset, a colonial council in Boston had declared "that none be Killed or Wounded that are Willing to surrender themselves into Custody." But these rules were soon abandoned on the grounds that the Indians themselves, failing to adhere either to the laws of war or to the law of nature, would "skulk"

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behind trees, rocks, and bushes rather than appear openly to do "civilized" battle. Similarly creating a desire for retribution were the cruelties perpetrated by Indians when ambushing English troops or overrunning strongholds housing women and children. Before long, both colonists and Indians were dismembering corpses and displaying body parts and heads on poles. (Nevertheless, Indians could not be killed with impunity. In the summer of 1676, four men were tried in Boston for the brutal murder of three squaws and three Indian children; all were found guilty and two were executed.)

The hatred kindled by King Philip's War became even more pronounced in 1689 when strong Indian tribes allied themselves with the French against the British. In 1694, the General Court of Massachusetts ordered all friendly Indians confined to a small area. A bounty was then offered for the killing or capture of hostile Indians, and scalps were accepted as proof of a kill. In 1704, this was amended in the direction of "Christian practice" by means of a scale of rewards graduated by age and sex; bounty was proscribed in the case of children under the age of ten, subsequently raised to twelve (sixteen in Connecticut, fifteen in New Jersey). Here, too, genocidal intent was far from evident; the practices were justified on grounds of self-preservation and revenge, and in reprisal for the extensive scalping carried out by Indians.

IV

We turn now to the American frontier. In Pennsylvania, where the white population had doubled between 1740 and 1760, the pressure on Indian lands increased formidably; in 1754, encouraged by French agents, Indian warriors struck, starting a long and bloody conflict known as the French and Indian War or the Seven Years' War.

By 1763, according to one estimate, about 2,000 whites had been killed or vanished into captivity. Stories of real, exaggerated, and imaginary atrocities spread by word of mouth, in narratives of imprisonment, and by means of provincial newspapers. Some British officers gave orders that captured Indians be given no quarter, and even after the end of formal hostilities, feelings continued to run so high that murderers of Indians, like the infamous Paxton Boys, were applauded rather than arrested.

As the United States expanded westward, such conflicts multiplied. So far had things progressed by 1784 that, according to one British traveler, "white Americans have the most rancorous antipathy to the whole race of Indians; and nothing is more common than to hear them talk of extirpating them totally from the face of the earth, men, women, and children."

Settlers on the expanding frontier treated the Indians with contempt, often robbing and killing them at will. In 1782, a militia pursuing an Indian war party that had slain a woman and a child massacred more than 90 peaceful Moravian Delawares. Although federal and state officials tried to bring such killers to justice, their efforts, writes the historian Francis Prucha, "were no match for the singular Indian-hating mentality of the frontiersmen, upon whom depended conviction in the local courts."

But that, too, is only part of the story. The view that the Indian problem could be solved by force alone came under vigorous challenge from a number of federal commissioners who from 1832 on headed the Bureau of Indian Affairs and supervised the network of agents and subagents in the field. Many Americans on the eastern seaboard, too, openly criticized the rough ways of the frontier. Pity for the vanishing Indian, together with a sense of remorse, led to a revival of the 18th-century concept of the noble savage. America's native inhabitants were romanticized in historiography, art, and literature, notably by James Fenimore Cooper in his *Leatherstocking Tales* and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his long poem, *The Song of Hiawatha*.

On the western frontier itself, such views were of course dismissed as rank sentimentality; the perceived nobility of the savages, observed cynics, was directly proportional to one's geographic distance from them. Instead, settlers vigorously complained that the regular army was failing to meet the Indian threat more aggressively. A large-scale uprising of the Sioux in Minnesota in 1862, in which Indian war parties killed, raped, and pillaged all over the countryside, left in its wake a climate of fear and anger that spread over the entire West.

Colorado was especially tense. Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians, who had legitimate grievances against the encroaching white settlers, also fought for the sheer joy of combat, the desire for booty, and the prestige that accrued from success. The overland route to the East was particularly vulnerable: at one point in 1864, Denver was cut off from all supplies, and there were several butcheries of entire families at outlying ranches. In one gruesome case, all of the victims were scalped, the throats of the two children were cut, and the mother's body was ripped open and her entrails pulled over her face.

Writing in September 1864, the Reverend William Crawford reported on the attitude of the white population of Colorado: "There is but one sentiment in regard to the final disposition which

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shall be made of the Indians: 'Let them be exterminated—men, women, and children together.'" Of course, he added, "I do not myself share in such views." The *Rocky Mountain News*, which at first had distinguished between friendly and hostile Indians, likewise began to advocate extermination of this "dissolute, vagabondish, brutal, and ungrateful race."

With the regular army off fighting the Civil War in the South, the western settlers depended for their protection on volunteer regiments, many lamentably deficient in discipline. It was a local force of such volunteers that committed the massacre of Sand Creek, Colorado on November 29, 1864. Formed in August, the regiment was made up of miners down on their luck, cowpokes tired of ranching, and others itching for battle. Its commander, the Reverend John Milton Chivington, a politician and ardent Indian-hater, had urged war without mercy, even against children. "Nits make lice," he was fond of saying. The ensuing orgy of violence in the course of a surprise attack on a large Indian encampment left between 70 and 250 Indians dead, the majority women and children. The regiment suffered eight killed and 40 wounded.

News of the Sand Creek massacre sparked an outcry in the East and led to several congressional inquiries. Although some of the investigators appear to have been biased against Chivington, there was no disputing that he had issued orders not to give quarter, or that his soldiers had engaged in massive scalping and other mutilations.

THE SORRY tale continues in California. The area that in 1850 became admitted to the Union as the 31st state had once held an Indian population estimated at anywhere between 150,000 and 250,000. By the end of the 19th century, the number had dropped to 15,000. As elsewhere, disease was the single most important factor, although the state also witnessed an unusually large number of deliberate killings.

The discovery of gold in 1848 brought about a fundamental change in Indian-white relations. Whereas formerly Mexican ranchers had both exploited the Indians and provided them with a minimum of protection, the new immigrants, mostly young single males, exhibited animosity from the start, trespassing on Indian lands and often freely killing any who were in their way. An American officer wrote to his sister in 1860: "There never was a viler sort of men in the world than is congregated about these mines."

What was true of miners was often true as well of newly arrived farmers. By the early 1850's, whites in California outnumbered Indians by about two to one, and the lot of the natives, gradually forced into the least fertile parts of the territory, began to deteriorate rapidly. Many succumbed to starvation; others, desperate for food, went on the attack, stealing and killing livestock. Indian women who prostituted themselves to feed their families contributed to the demographic decline by removing themselves from the reproductive cycle. As a solution to the growing problem, the federal government sought to confine the Indians to reservations, but this was opposed both by the Indians themselves and by white ranchers fearing the loss of labor. Meanwhile, clashes multiplied.

One of the most violent, between white settlers and Yuki Indians in the Round Valley of Mendocino County, lasted for several years and was waged with great ferocity. Although Governor John B. Weller cautioned against an indiscriminate campaign—"[Y]our operations against the Indians," he wrote to the commander of a volunteer force in 1859, "must be confined strictly to those who are known to have been engaged in killing the stock and destroying the property of our citizens . . . and the women and children under all circumstances must be spared"—his words had little effect. By 1864 the number of Yukis had declined from about 5,000 to 300.

The Humboldt Bay region, just northwest of the Round Valley, was the scene of still more collisions. Here too Indians stole and killed cattle, and militia companies retaliated. A secret league, formed in the town of Eureka, perpetrated a particularly hideous massacre in February 1860, surprising Indians sleeping in their houses and killing about sixty, mostly by hatchet. During the same morning hours, whites attacked two other Indian rancherias, with the same deadly results. In all, nearly 300 Indians were killed on one day, at least half of them women and children.

Once again there was outrage and remorse. "The white settlers," wrote a historian only 20 years later, "had received great provocation. . . . But nothing they had suffered, no depredations the savages had committed, could justify the cruel slaughter of innocent women and children." This had also been the opinion of a majority of the people of Eureka, where a grand jury condemned the massacre, while in cities like San Francisco all such killings repeatedly drew strong criticism. But atrocities continued: by the 1870's, as one historian has summarized the situation in California, "only remnants of the aboriginal populations were still alive, and those who had survived the maelstrom of the preceding quarter-century were dislocated, demoralized, and impoverished."

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Lastly we come to the wars on the Great Plains. Following the end of the Civil War, large waves of white migrants, arriving simultaneously from East and West, squeezed the Plains Indians between them. In response, the Indians attacked vulnerable white outposts; their "acts of devilish cruelty," reported one officer on the scene, had "no parallel in savage warfare." The trails west were in similar peril: in December 1866, an army detachment of 80 men was lured into an ambush on the Bozeman Trail, and all of the soldiers were killed.

To force the natives into submission, Generals Sherman and Sheridan, who for two decades after the Civil War commanded the Indian-fighting army units on the Plains, applied the same strategy they had used so successfully in their marches across Georgia and in the Shenandoah Valley. Unable to defeat the Indians on the open prairie, they pursued them to their winter camps, where numbing cold and heavy snows limited their mobility. There they destroyed the lodges and stores of food, a tactic that inevitably resulted in the deaths of women and children.

Genocide? These actions were almost certainly in conformity with the laws of war accepted at the time. The principles of limited war and of noncombatant immunity had been codified in Francis Lieber's *General Order No. 100*, issued for the Union Army on April 24, 1863. But the villages of warring Indians who refused to surrender were considered legitimate military objectives. In any event, there was never any order to exterminate the Plains Indians, despite heated pronouncements on the subject by the outraged Sherman and despite Sheridan's famous quip that "the only good Indians I ever saw were dead." Although Sheridan did not mean that all Indians should be shot on sight, but rather that none of the warring Indians on the Plains could be trusted, his words, as the historian James Axtell rightly suggests, did "more to harm straight thinking about Indian-white relations than any number of Sand Creeks or Wounded Knees."

As for that last-named encounter, it took place on December 29, 1890 on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. By this time, the 7th Regiment of U.S. Cavalry had compiled a reputation for aggressiveness, particularly in the wake of its surprise assault in 1868 on a Cheyenne village on the Washita river in Kansas, where about 100 Indians were killed by General George Custer's men.

Still, the battle of Washita, although one-sided, had not been a massacre: wounded warriors were given first aid, and 53 women and children who had hidden in their lodges survived the assault and were taken prisoner. Nor were the Cheyennes unarmed innocents; as their chief Black Kettle acknowledged, they had been conducting regular raids into Kansas that he was powerless to stop.

The encounter at Wounded Knee, 22 years later, must be seen in the context of the Ghost Dance religion, a messianic movement that since 1889 had caused great excitement among Indians in the area and that was interpreted by whites as a general call to war. While an encampment of Sioux was being searched for arms, a few young men created an incident; the soldiers, furious at what they considered an act of Indian treachery, fought back furiously as guns surrounding the encampment opened fire with deadly effect. The Army's casualties were 25 killed and 39 wounded, mostly as a result of friendly fire. More than 300 Indians died.

Wounded Knee has been called "perhaps the best-known genocide of North American Indians." But, as Robert Utley has concluded in a careful analysis, it is better described as "a regrettable, tragic accident of war," a bloodbath that neither side intended. In a situation where women and children were mixed with men, it was inevitable that some of the former would be killed. But several groups of women and children were in fact allowed out of the encampment, and wounded Indian warriors, too, were spared and taken to a hospital. There may have been a few deliberate killings of noncombatants, but on the whole, as a court of inquiry ordered by President Harrison established, the officers and soldiers of the unit made supreme efforts to avoid killing women and children.

On January 15, 1891, the last Sioux warriors surrendered. Apart from isolated clashes, America's Indian wars had ended.

V

The Genocide Convention was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1948 and came into force on January 12, 1951; after a long delay, it was ratified by the United States in 1986. Since genocide is now a technical term in international criminal law, the definition established by the convention has assumed prima-facie authority, and it is with this definition that we should begin in assessing the applicability of the concept of genocide to the events we have been considering.

According to Article II of the convention, the crime of genocide consists of a series of acts "committed *with intent* to destroy, in whole or in part, a

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national, ethnical, racial, or religious group *as such*" (emphases added). Practically all legal scholars accept the centrality of this clause. During the deliberations over the convention, some argued for a clear specification of the reasons, or motives, for the destruction of a group. In the end, instead of a list of such motives, the issue was resolved by adding the words "as such"—i.e., the motive or reason for the destruction must be the ending of the group as a national, ethnic, racial, or religious entity. Evidence of such a motive, as one legal scholar put it, "will constitute an integral part of the proof of a genocidal plan, and therefore of genocidal intent."

The crucial role played by intentionality in the Genocide Convention means that under its terms the huge number of Indian deaths from epidemics cannot be considered genocide. The lethal diseases were introduced inadvertently, and the Europeans cannot be blamed for their ignorance of what medical science would discover only centuries later. Similarly, military engagements that led to the death of noncombatants, like the battle of the Washita, cannot be seen as genocidal acts, for the loss of innocent life was not intended and the soldiers did not aim at the destruction of the Indians as a defined group. By contrast, some of the massacres in California, where both the perpetrators and their supporters openly acknowledged a desire to destroy the Indians as an ethnic entity, might indeed be regarded under the terms of the convention as exhibiting genocidal intent.

Even as it outlaws the destruction of a group "in whole or in part," the convention does not address the question of what percentage of a group must be affected in order to qualify as genocide. As a benchmark, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has suggested "a reasonably significant number, relative to the total of the group as a whole," adding that the actual or attempted destruction should also relate to "the factual opportunity of the accused to destroy a group in a specific geographic area within the sphere of his control, and not in relation to the entire population of the group in a wider geographic sense." If this principle were adopted, an atrocity like the Sand Creek massacre, limited to one group in a specific single locality, might also be considered an act of genocide.

OF COURSE, it is far from easy to apply a legal concept developed in the middle of the 20th century to events taking place many decades if not hundreds of years earlier. Our knowledge of many of these occurrences is incomplete. Moreover, the malefactors, long since dead, cannot be tried in a court of law, where it would be possible to establish crucial factual details and to clarify relevant legal principles.

Applying today's standards to events of the past raises still other questions, legal and moral alike. While history has no statute of limitations, our legal system rejects the idea of retroactivity (*ex post facto* laws). Morally, even if we accept the idea of universal principles transcending particular cultures and periods, we must exercise caution in condemning, say, the conduct of war during America's colonial period, which for the most part conformed to then-prevailing notions of right and wrong. To understand all is hardly to forgive all, but historical judgment, as the scholar Gordon Leff has correctly stressed, "must always be contextual: it is no more reprehensible for an age to have lacked our values than to have lacked forks."

The real task, then, is to ascertain the context of a specific situation and the options it presented. Given circumstances, and the moral standards of the day, did the people on whose conduct we are sitting in judgment have a choice to act differently? Such an approach would lead us to greater indulgence toward the Puritans of New England, who fought for their survival, than toward the miners and volunteer militias of California who often slaughtered Indian men, women, and children for no other reason than to satisfy their appetite for gold and land. The former, in addition, battled their Indian adversaries in an age that had little concern for humane standards of warfare, while the latter committed their atrocities in the face of vehement denunciation not only by self-styled humanitarians in the faraway East but by many of their fellow citizens in California.

Finally, even if some episodes can be considered genocidal—that is, tending toward genocide—they certainly do not justify condemning an entire society. Guilt is personal, and for good reason the Genocide Convention provides that only "persons" can be charged with the crime, probably even ruling out legal proceedings against governments. No less significant is that a massacre like Sand Creek was undertaken by a local volunteer militia and was not the expression of official U.S. policy. No regular U.S. Army unit was ever implicated in a similar atrocity. In the majority of actions, concludes Robert Utley, "the Army shot noncombatants incidentally and accidentally, not purposefully." As for the larger society, even if some elements in the white population, mainly in the West, at times advocated extermination, no offi-

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cial of the U.S. government ever seriously proposed it. Genocide was never American policy, nor was it the result of policy.

The violent collision between whites and America's native population was probably unavoidable. Between 1600 and 1850, a dramatic surge in population led to massive waves of emigration from Europe, and many of the millions who arrived in the New World gradually pushed westward into America's seemingly unlimited space. No doubt, the 19th-century idea of America's "manifest destiny" was in part a rationalization for acquisitiveness, but the resulting dispossession of the Indians was as unstoppable as other great population movements of the past. The U.S. government could not have prevented the westward movement even if it had wanted to.

In the end, the sad fate of America's Indians represents not a crime but a tragedy, involving an irreconcilable collision of cultures and values. Despite the efforts of well-meaning people in both camps, there existed no good solution to this clash. The Indians were not prepared to give up the nomadic life of the hunter for the sedentary life of the farmer. The new Americans, convinced of their cultural and racial superiority, were unwilling to grant the original inhabitants of the continent the vast preserve of land required by the Indians' way of life. The consequence was a conflict in which there were few heroes, but which was far from a simple tale of hapless victims and merciless aggressors. To fling the charge of genocide at an entire society serves neither the interests of the Indians nor those of history.

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The Einsteins of Wall Street

Jeremy Bernstein

If you decide you don't have to get A's, you can learn an enormous amount in college.

—I.I. Rabi

In the spring of 1969, I got the somewhat lunatic idea of going to the Northwest Frontier of Pakistan to see the high mountains—K-2, Nanga Parbat, and the like. As it happened, I had a Pakistani colleague in physics with a connection to both the University of Islamabad and the Ford Foundation. He arranged for me to become a Ford Foundation visiting professor at the university, and before taking up my teaching duties I managed to explore all sorts of places on the frontier that are now presumably inaccessible to travelers.

In Islamabad I led a pleasant but somewhat lonely existence—until, after about a month, I heard a pair of English-speaking voices that turned out to belong to another Ford Foundation professor and his wife. This was not any old professor. It was Marshall Stone, one of the world's best mathematicians. In addition to creating, at the University of Chicago, the leading school of mathematics in the country, Stone had also been the teacher of my teacher at Harvard, George Mackey, who had interested me in the mathematical foundations of quantum theory. Now here he was, accompanied by his rather recently acquired wife Vila, a very attractive and voluble Yugoslavian.

The three of us spent a good deal of time together—Stone, an inveterate traveler, had also come to Pakistan to visit the frontier—and in the course of it Vila mentioned that she had a daughter in New York whom I might like to meet. When I returned to the States, I called this young woman. She was seeing someone at the time, but she thought that her beau and I might have things to talk about. He was, she said, studying "derivatives," which in calculus refers to the rate of change along a curve. Since this is one of the first things one learns in calculus, I assumed that he was a beginner, which did not seem to promise much by way of conversation. In the event, he turned out to be an amiable chap by the name of Myron.

I forget what we talked about. But I do dimly remember that at one point his girlfriend whispered in my ear that Myron was going to win the Nobel Prize someday. She turned out to be right about that, although it took a while: in 1997, Myron Scholes and Robert Merton shared the Nobel Prize in economics. Together with Fischer Black, who had died two years earlier (and who will come into this story later on), Scholes had created what is known as the Black-Scholes equation, published in 1973. Merton invented another approach to the same problem.

The Black-Scholes equation does indeed deal with derivatives, but in another sense: that is, in-

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vestment instruments, like options on stocks or bonds, whose present value is "derived" from the projected future values of the financial commodities that underlie them. The Black-Scholes equation, with its many adumbrations, is used to assess the market value of such options at any given point in time. It is the Newton's Law, or the Schrödinger equation, of the whole field of financial engineering that makes these markets operate.

I had more or less forgotten about all this until reading a new book by Emanuel Derman called *My Life As A Quant: Reflections on Physics and Finance.** A "quant" is the rubric used on Wall Street and elsewhere to denote people who practice quantitative financial analysis—financial engineering—for which the Black-Scholes equation is a prototype. Physics comes into Derman's memoir because he has a Ph.D. in physics from Columbia and was one of the early POWS (Physicists on Wall Street), having joined the financial firm of Goldman Sachs in 1985.

The first part of Derman's book traces the somewhat unlikely steps that took him from his native Cape Town, South Africa, first to Columbia and then via the AT&T Bell Labs and elsewhere to Wall Street. As he notes in his book, our paths crossed at various times. I do not have specific memories of our meetings, but both of us are theoretical elementary-particle physicists, and our world is not large.

Derman arrived in New York in 1966. The physics department at Columbia was then still under the aegis of I.I. Rabi, whose standards were extremely high. Apart from Rabi himself, there were other present and future Nobel Prize winners. You had to be very good, and very determined, to survive in that department.

Derman, who remarks wryly that about 10 percent of his projected life span was spent getting a Ph.D. at Columbia, wrote his thesis on what we refer to as "phenomenology"—deriving some underlying theory to make a model that either predicts or explains an experimental result. From the sound of it, Derman's was a very respectable piece of work, one that incidentally required him to learn to use the rather primitive computer facilities that were then available. The thesis was good enough to get him a post-doctoral position at the University of Pennsylvania.

The next several years were difficult. Derman moved from one temporary academic job to another, usually in cities where he was separated from his wife, until finally taking a position in the business-systems center at Bell Labs in New Jersey, to which he could commute from New York. Although he seems to have hated Bell—his chapter on it is called "In the Penal Colony"—in those years the place was full of people at the top of their fields, including Arno Penzias, Robert Wilson, and other past and future Nobelists.†

At Bell, Derman wanted to join the research group working on the UNIX operating system—the multi-user, multi-task system that now runs computer complexes around the world. But all his requests were denied, and by the early 1980's he had had enough. By coincidence, this happened to be the time when the major brokerage firms were building up their financial-engineering departments and were headhunting at places like Bell.

II

The brokerage business had changed: from merely selling stocks and bonds, it was now dealing in all sorts of derivatives, which play an important role in the marketplace in diversifying risk and maintaining price stability. For example, the firm of Salomon Brothers had put together a powerful group of analysts under John Meriwether; one of its consultants was Robert Merton, the Harvard professor who would later share the Nobel Prize with Scholes (and whose father, also Robert but with a different middle initial, was a noted sociologist of science at Columbia). Similarly deep into derivatives was Goldman Sachs; it was there, in December 1985, that Derman took a job in the financial-strategies group and had his first encounter with Black-Scholes.

If you put "Black-Scholes" into Google, you will come up with something like 128,000 entries. Most of them are technical; some, clearly by ex-physicists, offer to tutor you for a considerable fee. While wandering through this jungle I came across the perfect site for my purposes. It is called "Black-Scholes the Easy Way," and can be found at http://homepage.mac.com/j.norstad. The person who put it up, John Norstad, is a computer scientist whose notes, representing his own learning process, are very unassuming and clear. In what follows I will use Norstad's examples.

In the early 80's, as I mentioned, financial institutions were doing a substantial business in the sale of derivatives. A typical example is a stock option.

* Wiley, 288 pp., $29.95.

† I wrote a series of linked profiles of some of these physicists that was published as a book in 1984, *Three Degrees Above Zero*.

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This involves a contract between two parties that allows you, the buyer, to purchase a particular stock at a future time from the seller at a specified price called the "strike price"—which is often the price of the stock itself when you buy the option.

Until that future time, you do not own the stock itself, only the option to buy it. If, when you do buy it, the value of the stock has gone up, you will be "in the money." If it has gone down, you will be "out of the money"—that is, out the cost of the option.*

The question is: what should be the price of the option when you buy it? This is what the Black-Scholes equation purports to compute. To see what is involved, I will, following Norstad, consider a "toy" model—i.e., one that illustrates many of the general features of the problem without the mathematical complexity. I can then tell you some of what you would have to include for the full-blown Black-Scholes model.

In the toy model, there is a stock whose current value is $100—the strike price. What makes the model a toy is that, at the time the option is to be exercised, there will be only two possible prices: $120 and $80. (In the real world, there will of course be a continuum of prices.) Also, the kind of option I am considering here is known as a "European call option"—it can only be exercised at one definite time in the future, whereas an "American call option" can be exercised at any time. (I have no idea where these terms come from.) Finally, I will assume that the probability of the stock's rising to $120 is ¾ while the probability of its falling to $80 is ¼.

What should you be willing to pay for the option? At first sight this seems simple enough. With the specified probabilities, the expected outcome is (¾ x $20) + (¼ x $0), or $15. Thus, the option on the $100 stock should be worth $15 to you, and you can expect to earn another $5 if you buy it.

Not so fast, however. This would be true if the seller were not engaging in financial engineering—an activity that goes under the general heading of arbitrage. *With* arbitrage, one can gain a certain profit and incur no risk at all. Not only that, but the cost of the arbitrage itself is what determines the cost of the option. This changes everything—and explains why the financial institutions were hiring quants by the carload.

Here is how arbitrage works in the case we have been examining. Assume again that you are the buyer, and assume that I am the seller. Now assume that a friendly bank is willing to lend me money interest-free. (To see how interest payments would modify the results, look at Norstad's website.) Assume finally that I can buy fractional shares of the $100 stock itself from a friendly broker, commission-free. By means of these assumptions, to use another term of art, we have made the problem "frictionless."

Now suppose you have calculated the expected outcomes according to the formula presented above and are willing to give me $15 to buy the option. I will now show how, no matter what the real outcome might be, I can always come away with $5 for myself.

It works like this. I take your $15 and put $5 of it in my pocket; you will never see it again. Then I borrow $40 from my friendly bank as "leverage." Next, with your $10 and the borrowed $40, I buy a half-share of the stock. This is called the "hedge." It has now cost me $10 to replicate the option, and this will turn out to be its true value.

How so? If the final price is $120, you will exercise your option and ask me to buy the stock for you at $100. What I will then do is to sell my half-share for $60, repay the bank its $40, and add the remaining $20 to the $100 you have given me to buy the share at its current price, which is the price you agreed to pay. I have not lost on the run-up in the price of the stock, and I have still pocketed the $5.

If, on the other hand, the final price is $80, you will not exercise your option and you will be out your $15. I, however, will sell my half-share for $40, which I will then return to the bank, again still pocketing the $5.

What all this amounts to is that if you have given me $15 for the option, you have overpaid by $5. If you think about it, the $10 price is a kind of tipping point, an "equilibrium price" at which it is not profitable for me either to buy or to sell. If I can sell the option for *more* than $10, I will make money; if someone wants to sell me the option for *less* than $10, I will buy it and again make money. And that is how Black and Scholes approached the problem of option evaluation using arbitrage: find the price at which there is equilibrium between buying and selling.

What about Merton and his different approach, which as it happens is the one that is now more generally used? To understand that approach, note

* This is actually a "call" option. One can also buy a "put," in which you have the option to *sell* the stock at the strike price. In a put option, you would normally want the stock to fall, since you can then sell it for more than it is worth. A theorem demonstrates that, for a given stock, and under the conditions where the Black-Scholes equation is valid, the values of a put option and a call option are related. This is called the "put-call parity theorem."

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that in finding the correct option price in the presence of arbitrage, the probabilities ¾ and ¼, which we used earlier to compute our expected gain, played no role. In real life, indeed, there is little likelihood that we would ever be given these probabilities in any reliable way. Even the presence of a buyer is in an important sense irrelevant.

To see why that is so, suppose you constructed a portfolio that consisted of $10 plus a $40 loan from a friendly bank, which you then invested in a half-share of the stock. This is called a "synthetic option." If you were to sell this stock at the time when its value was either $120 or $80, the amount you would gain or lose would be the same as the gain or loss in the preceding example where the buyer paid $10 for the *option* to buy at a future time. The essence of Merton's approach is to show that one can, in general, construct synthetic options that cost the same as real options and that have the same outcomes. This is what these brokerage firms do—they construct synthetic options.

WHATEVER THE difference in their approach, Black, Scholes, and Merton all had to confront the fact that in the real world, unlike in our toy model, we do not have just two future prices but a continuum. This gets us into the question of how you can predict the future of a stock price. Black and Scholes adopted a model according to which stock prices follow a "random walk," also known as a "drunkard's walk."

Let us stipulate that a drunkard begins his walk at a lamppost and that, with each step, he can go two feet in a totally random direction. How far away from the lamppost, on average, will the drunkard get after a given number of steps? Many people would say nowhere, since he could end up going in circles. But on average that is not the case: the path may appear jagged, but the distance from the lamppost continually increases. Indeed, the average distance will increase as the square root of the number of steps (or, technically speaking, the square root of the average of the square of the distance).

This drunkard's walk is itself an example of "Brownian motion," where the square-root feature generally shows up. The phenomenon is named after the discovery in 1827 by the Scottish botanist Robert Brown that microscopic pollen grains suspended in water execute a curious dancing motion. Here the "drunkard" is a pollen, driven hither and yon (as was later understood) by its collisions with invisible water molecules. The distance traveled by the pollen, Albert Einstein showed in 1905, is proportional to the square root of the time during which it is observed.

Assuming that stock prices follow a continuous random walk, Black and Scholes could make a prediction for the future distribution of the price of a stock. (Specifically, they analyzed the logarithm of the price.) In his book, Derman provides a graph plotting this distribution. The prices form a kind of wedge on the graph, with the pointed end at the initial price and the wedge continually widening as time goes by and the price becomes more and more uncertain. Knowing a stock's probable future prices, Black and Scholes were then able to derive an equation for the value of the option at any given moment. It is a differential equation, involving the sort of derivatives that I mistakenly thought Scholes was learning about when I met him.

Since the value of the stock is constantly changing—unlike in our toy example, where the value changes only once—the hedge must also be constantly adjusted. Generally, the price of the option will be the total price of this constantly adjusted hedge. That is the price that people who sell these options have to compute.

Most equations of this kind have no simple solutions, but remarkably Black and Scholes found an exact one. What made their job easier was the fact that, suitably transformed, their equation is a familiar one in physics. It arises in the diffusion of heat, which takes place as hot molecules randomly collide with colder ones, giving up some of their energy; eventually, the two groups of molecules reach a common temperature. Since heat diffusion has been studied for well over a century, there are a lot of mathematical tools available.

Nevertheless, to me as a physicist, the Black-Scholes model is quite odd. All physical theories are models. Quantum electrodynamics, for example, which is the most precise theory ever created, operates in a model universe that contains only electrons and quanta of light-photons. The rest of the real universe, with its neutrons, protons, mesons, and the like, is ignored. The object of this model, like all other models in physics, is to predict the future. If the model is correct, then the numbers and curves one calculates with it will be confirmed by experiment. If not, the model is incorrect.

But the Black-Scholes model is quite different. It uses a model of the *future* to describe the *present*. In the absence of this model, or some equivalent of it, present stock options have no reasonable assigned value. What then is the test of the model?

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Presumably, it is that if one uses it as a guide to buy these options and, as a result, goes broke, one will be inclined to re-examine the assumptions.

Presumably.

III

Markets can remain irrational longer than you can remain solvent.

—John Maynard Keynes

WHEN DERMAN came to Goldman Sachs in 1985, the use of the Black-Scholes equation to evaluate options had become commonplace. It had gotten off to a somewhat rocky start. In 1968, Scholes became an assistant professor of finance at MIT; Black was a consultant for the Arthur D. Little company in Cambridge. The two of them began collaborating on various economics problems. At MIT there was also Paul Samuelson, one of the creators of modern mathematical economics. Samuelson had studied the use of Brownian motion to predict stock prices, and two of his own students had written theses attempting thereby to derive values for options. But it was left to Black and Scholes to finish the job.

They first derived their equation in 1969, submitting the results a year later to the *Journal of Political Economy*. The paper was rejected. Next they tried the *Review of Economics and Statistics*, which also turned it down. Revising and simplifying, they sent it back to the *Journal of Political Economy*, which finally published it in the May/June 1973 number under the title, "Pricing of Options and Corporate Liabilities." Merton published his own, somewhat more general paper, "Theory of Rational Option Pricing," in the *Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science* at about the same time. These turned out to be two of the most influential papers ever published in economic theory.

The original work was done on stock options. By the 1980's, the problem had become how to extend it to bond options. At Goldman, the first attempt involved using the Black-Scholes equation, but by the time Derman came to the firm it was understood that this had limited validity. In the first place, future bond prices follow a different curve from future stock prices because of the fact that at the expiration date, the bond price returns to par (its initial offering price). Thus, the spread of future bond prices has a banana-like shape rather than a wedge.

In the second place, bond prices tend to be connected to each other. Familiar examples are Treasury bonds of different durations. Their prices tend to move in concert. This does not happen with stocks, whose prices vary independently.

The first problem could be dealt with by focusing on the yield: the average annual percentage return of the bond if purchased at its present price and then held to maturity. But the problem of the interconnection of bonds was much more serious. And this is where Fischer Black enters Derman's story. Black, who had joined Goldman in 1984, invited Derman to collaborate with him and another quant named Bill Toy to make a new model for pricing bond options that would take these interconnections into account.

Fischer Black is certainly the hero of Derman's book. He sounds like a wonderful man. Having money was never one of his major interests: he liked to point with pride to the fact that, of all Goldman's partners, he had the fewest shares in the firm. He was also one of the first academics to be hired on Wall Street, having been brought in by Robert Rubin, then Goldman's chairman. His great strength was his lucidity. He did not like clutter—mental or otherwise. Derman found that if he had a specific question, Black was very ready to try to answer it, but otherwise he was not very responsive.

By 1986, Black, Derman, and Toy had created a bond-option model that seemed to work. To make the model useful to traders, there had to be a computer program enabling them to estimate rapidly the price of the bond options they were selling, and one of the things Derman was able to bring to the collaboration was the skill at computer programming that he had acquired at Bell Labs. They created such a program, but because of Black's fastidiousness it took almost four years before a paper that he considered satisfactory could be published. Thanks to its simplicity and accessibility to traders, the BDT model, as it would be known, became widely used in the industry.

In 1988, after he had been at Goldman for a relatively short time, Derman decided that he needed a change of scene. He interviewed at Salomon Brothers, where eventually he took a job for a very unhappy year, after which he returned to Goldman. Of the groups at Salomon that he interviewed with, one, hand-picked by John Meriwether, enjoyed the reputation of being the savviest derivative traders on Wall Street. Derman did not get the job.

This was probably fortunate. Ten years later, this same group precipitated a crisis that led to a near-total meltdown of the world's financial markets.

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IV

In reading about this near meltdown—Roger Lowenstein's book *When Genius Failed* (2000) is an excellent source—I have been struck by the difference between it and the other financial scandals that we are now familiar with: Enron, Global Crossing, and the rest.

For one thing, there is the matter of scale: while the Enron scandal was a financial disaster for a large number of people, it was never a threat to the system as a whole. For another, there is the matter of intent: many of the people involved in these scandals have ended up in jail for participating in criminal activities. But for those involved in Long Term Capital Management (LTCM), which is what Meriwether's hedge fund was called, there was no criminal intent.

I am not even sure how interested in money the members of this group were, except as a measure of their smartness. The investment genius Bernie Cornfeld used to ask prospective employees of International Overseas Services—another financial disaster—"Do you sincerely want to be rich?" By this he meant: would you sell your sister? Had Meriwether's gang been asked this question, I think they might have had some difficulty answering.

Not long after Meriwether started his fund in 1993, he successfully recruited both Merton and Scholes. In his 1997 Nobel Prize autobiography, written a year before the final catastrophe, Merton was euphoric about the fund:

> The distinctive LTCM experience from the beginning to the present characterizes the theme of productive interaction of finance theory and finance practice. Indeed, in a twist on the more familiar version of that theme, the major investment magazine, *Institutional Investor*, characterized the remarkable collection of people at LTCM as "the best financial faculty in the world."

One wonders what the Nobel committee made of this, to say nothing of what they, and the editors of *Institutional Investor*, would make of it the following year when the "best financial faculty in the world" came close to wrecking the entire world's financial infrastructure.

The "dean" of this dream faculty, John Meriwether, was born into a middle-class Catholic family in Chicago in 1947. Educated in very strict parochial schools, he was a good student but not exceptional. He was, however, an extremely good golfer, and while working at the Flossmor Country Club he was selected for a college scholarship awarded only to caddies. He chose to attend Northwestern and then the University of Chicago to study business. One of his classmates at Chicago was Jon Corzine, now a Senator, who as CEO of Goldman became involved in the LTCM denouement.

In 1973, Meriwether went to work at Salomon. This was just before the explosion in derivative trading. In 1977, he began assembling the arbitrage group at Salomon, the same people with whom Derman had his unsuccessful interview and who later formed the core of LTCM.

In assembling his group, Meriwether sought people from anywhere who were smarter than anyone else—smarter even than he was. He had no complexes about this, and no problem in seeking misfits from academia so long as they were brilliant. These people, who were characterized by another Salomon trader as "a bunch of guys who would be playing with their slide rules at Bell Labs" if they had not been tapped by Meriwether, loved the financial-engineering models. They saw in the market a universe of inefficiency—a salad of incorrectly priced derivatives that they could gobble up while waiting for what they were certain would be the market's return to efficiency, at which point they would make a killing.

For several years, Meriwether's group thrived and Meriwether became richer and richer, investing in thoroughbred horses but remaining the rather unassuming parochial schoolboy he had been. There was nothing in his group, then or later, that remotely resembled the sort of partying that Bernie Cornfeld was famous for in Geneva. Meriwether's very tightknit group played liar's poker or golf together; what they did not do was to explain to outsiders anything about their trading. Banks and brokerage houses put in millions and millions without having any real idea of how the money was being invested. All that mattered to them was that out of the black box, vast returns kept appearing.

Here is a little analogy that may be useful in understanding the denouement. A scheme guarantees that I will win $1,000 at the roulette wheel in Monte Carlo. I will bet $1,000 on red. If it comes up red, I will collect. If it comes up black, I will bet $2,000 on the next turn of the wheel. If it comes up black again, I will double my bet. And so on. Unless the wheel is crooked, it must sooner or later come up red, and I will win my $1,000.

But there are limits. If, for example, the wheel comes up black ten times in a row, my next bet will run into the millions. What then? Once I start the game I cannot stop, unless I either hit red or am pre-

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pared to pay off the last bet. Perhaps I can persuade a bank to lend me the money—the leverage—to keep going. But if not, Keynes's maxim about the irrationality of the markets will have come true. The bank may want its money back, or the casino may decide that I have reached my limit and it will no longer accept a bet from me.

Either of these situations is potentially catastrophic, and both of them, in a manner of speaking, came to apply to LTCM. The key to everything was the assumption that the market would behave rationally—the same continuity of behavior that was one of the assumptions behind the Black-Scholes formula. For if the drunk on his random walk were suddenly to fall down a manhole, all bets would be off.

In late summer 1998, the fund had $3.6 billion in capital, which made this unknown firm in Greenwich, Connecticut a larger financial enterprise than any of the major brokerage houses on Wall Street. But during a five-week period in August and September they lost it all. They were wiped out. The "faculty" sustained personal losses of $1.9 billion.

To get a flavor of the catastrophe, consider again our toy model. The model is a toy because there are only two outcomes for the stock—$120 or $80. The difference between these numbers—the spread—is a measure of the risk, reflected in the amount that the hedge will cost us. In our example it was $10—the price of the option. But suppose we widen the spread to $140 and $60, or $80. If we do the algebra, we will find that the cost of the hedge has risen to $13.33.

In the real world, where we do not have only two outcomes, we must have some theory of future volatility. This is what LTCM thought it had. Its traders looked for stocks whose volatility, in their view, had been overestimated. Japan was a good source, which is why the firm opened an office in Tokyo. Owners of these stocks were ready to pay LTCM a premium to create a hedge. They were betting that, just as the roulette wheel has to come up red, in the course of time the market would behave rationally and the volatility—the spread—would relax to the predicted value. (As opposed to "real arbitrage," which occurs when two identical commodities have been priced differently, so that the two prices *must* converge, this sort of guessing, or hoping for convergence, is known as "statistical arbitrage.")

But there was an additional element. LTCM was not playing the game with its own money. It was playing with borrowed money. Taking advantage of the very loose regulation at the time—Alan Greenspan thought, and still thinks, that hedge funds should not be regulated at all—LTCM was able to give borrowed money to banks, which would then set up accounts, or "swaps," mirroring in terms of profits and loss the stock that LTCM wanted to buy. There was no limit on this, and banks were just shoveling money at the firm.

By the spring of 1998 it was already becoming unglued. Instead of narrowing, the spreads were becoming wider. This meant that LTCM had lost its bet on the option cost. It had also begun to make investments directly in stocks, and these were also losing money. Markets around the world were sinking. In August, Russia defaulted on its external debts, causing further chaos. Everyone was looking for liquidity, and LTCM, with its huge positions, could not unload. To add to everything, it had an arrangement with the firm of Bear Stearns, which acted as its broker of record on the understanding that it would stop carrying out transactions if the reserve it held from LTCM—its "cash in the box"—fell below $500 million. This was money based on LTCM's assets, which were rapidly melting away, which meant that the roulette wheel might stop, putting LTCM out of business.

Meriwether tried without success to borrow money from everyone he knew, including Warren Buffet and George Soros. But by the middle of September it was clear that without outside help the company would collapse and that, because of its intertwining relationships with banks and brokerages both here and abroad, the market itself might collapse. By the end of September, in a much-criticized move, the Federal Reserve orchestrated a rescue in which fourteen banks provided $3.65 billion to take over the fund. Long Term Capital Management was through.

DESPITE THEIR losses, the partners came out of this debacle as wealthy men. Nor did their professional lives seem to have been destroyed. Merton is now a professor at the Harvard Business School. Scholes is a partner in a firm in Menlo Park called Oak Hill Capital Management. Meriwether, hardly missing a beat, started a new firm called JWM Partners, the roster of whose associates includes several names familiar from LTCM.

As for financial engineering, to judge by Derman's courses at Columbia, where he now runs the financial-engineering program, it too is thriving. And Black-Scholes-Merton? So far as I know, its reputation still rides high. All in all, I cannot help thinking of Albert Einstein's reply when asked what he would say if experiments failed to confirm his theory of gravitation. "Then I would have felt sorry for the dear Lord," Einstein responded. "The theory is correct."

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I.B. Singer and Me

Terry Teachout

THE BARE facts of Isaac Bashevis Singer's life make for almost as good a story as any of the fictional tales he committed to paper in the course of his long career. Yitskhok Zynger (he did not adopt the more familiar version of his name until 1950) was born 100 years ago in the Polish village of Leoncin. The son of a hasidic rabbi, he spent his early childhood in a world far removed from modernity, and even after his family moved to Warsaw's Jewish quarter in 1908, his parents were determined to insulate their children from the corrosive effects of modern life. But Singer, like so many of his contemporaries, felt the near-irresistible pull of Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment, and though his attitude toward it would become increasingly equivocal as he grew older, he immersed himself in Western philosophy, translated contemporary novels into Yiddish while writing short stories in the same language, and led an active, at times alarmingly complicated sexual life.

In 1935 he followed his older brother, the author Israel Joshua Singer, to America. He began writing for the *Jewish Daily Forward*, New York City's largest Yiddish newspaper, where most of his stories and novels would originally run as serials. His tales of *shtetl* life in Poland began appearing in English after World War II, and when *Partisan Review* published "Gimpel the Fool" in 1953, translated into English by Saul Bellow, Singer began to attract attention beyond the narrow confines of the Yiddish-speaking community. For years he published regularly in COMMENTARY, eventually being taken up by mass-circulation magazines like the *New Yorker*, *Esquire*, and *Playboy*. By the 70's he was famous. He won the Nobel Prize in 1978, and two successful Hollywood films were made from his work in the 80's, an appallingly inflated Barbra Streisand-directed version of "Yentl, the Yeshiva Boy" (1983) and Paul Mazursky's scrupulous adaptation of *Enemies, a Love Story*, the latter released two years before Singer's death in 1991.

Now, on the occasion of his centenary, a handsome three-volume set of Singer's short stories has been issued by the Library of America, the nonprofit house that publishes "authoritative editions of America's best and most significant writing."*

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* *Collected Stories*: "Gimpel the Fool" *to* "The Letter Writer" (789 pp., $35.00), *Collected Stories*: "A Friend of Kafka" *to* "Passions" (856 pp., $35.00), and *Collected Stories*: "One Night in Brazil" *to* "The Death of Methuselah" (899 pp., $35.00), all edited by Ilan Stavans. The three volumes are also available in a boxed set that includes *Singer: An Album*, a 127-page paperbound anthology containing 80 illustrations, a biographical essay by James Gibbons, and appreciations of Singer by Nicholas Dawidoff, Robert Giroux, Joyce Carol Oates, Cynthia Ozick, and others. In addition, the Library of America is sponsoring a nationwide series of Singer-related events. (For information, go to www.singer100.org.)

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Though it had previously brought out the English-language writings of Vladimir Nabokov, this is the first time the Library of America has published an author whose works were written in a language other than English. In justifying the decision to treat Singer as a full-fledged American writer, Max Rudin, the Library of America's publisher, cites a remark Singer made late in life:

> If you ask me from an emotional point of view, I don't feel myself a foreigner because I love America and I love the American people. And since my own country, Poland, where I was born, almost does not exist as far as I am concerned—it's a different world there—the U.S. is my real home now. So just as English has become to me a second original [tongue], America is to me my real country.

IN WRITING about Singer, I claim no special competence, nor do I have anything useful to say about his place in the Yiddish literary tradition or the historical accuracy of his often lurid portrayals of *shtetl* life, two matters over which critics and scholars wrangle angrily to this day.* No doubt the answers are important—but not to me. The composer-critic Virgil Thomson once remarked that the way to write "American music" was to be an American, then write whatever music you wished. Judged by a similar standard, Singer was an American writer, and he was at least as much of a New Yorker as I am, since he spent most of the last half-century of his life in a Manhattan apartment four blocks north of where I live. And though his work may not mean to me what it does to an informed Jewish reader, it is hardly without personal meaning for me.

Let me try to explain. It is, I think, a pleasant anomaly that the music critic of COMMENTARY should be a small-town boy from southeast Missouri who knew next to nothing about Jews until he moved to New York City at the tender age of twenty-nine. Music, as everyone knows, is the quintessentially Jewish art form, and in my youth I even played the violin, that most Jewish of instruments, though my mother never said anything to me remotely resembling the exhortation allegedly beloved of Jewish mothers the world over, "So, you want to be like Heifetz? Practice!"

I half-expected her to, though, if only because I had run across that sentence regularly in such books as Sam Levenson's *Everything but Money* and Allan Sherman's *A Gift of Laughter*. The word "humorist" is now thought quaint, but warm, cuddly Jewish humorists were all the rage when I was young, and I must have read *Everything but Money* a dozen times, trying to imagine what it would have felt like to grow up in a large family, the way Sam Levenson and my mother had. That their experiences were in some fundamental way dissimilar never occurred to me; so far as I knew, all large families were alike. I understood that Levenson was the son of Jewish immigrants, and that their religious beliefs were different from mine, but the rest, I assumed, was merely local color.

Nor was I well equipped to ferret out other differences. I had no idea, for instance, that most of the comedians I saw on television in the 60's were Jewish, and even if I had, it probably would not have mattered, the process of assimilation having by then gone a long way toward denaturing mass-market Jewish comedy. What would it have meant to me to learn that Jack Benny was Jewish? Or Alan King? Only rarely did a whiff of something excitingly alien find its way to the television set in the family room of my Missouri home. I remember being puzzled by Jackie Mason's accent when I saw him on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, and puzzled in a different way by Woody Allen's references to being Jewish, but my puzzlement was no more than that. I did not yet know that it was merely the tip of a cultural iceberg that I would spend a good deal of my adult life exploring.

When I left home to make my way in the world and started meeting Jews of various kinds, I found them not merely companionable but intriguing. Having grown up in a place where it was taken for granted that nice people did not raise their voices, I was astonished by the directness with which my new friends spoke their minds. In college I worked with a jazz pianist who played at Jewish weddings, and I was no less startled by the fact that the well-to-do couples who booked our band treated us like artists, not servants. Discovering the music of Gustav Mahler taught me lessons of a different sort, though I learned them as much through intuition as anything else, not yet having the knowledge necessary to put Mahler's work (and personality) in any wider perspective. In due course I started reading COMMENTARY, which brought me face-to-face

* "'Abraham Sutzkever was starving, fighting Nazis with the partisans in the Lithuanian woods and writing great Yiddish poetry about the tragic fate of the Jews on fragments of bark; Singer was eating cheese blintzes at Famous Dairy Restaurant on 72nd Street and thinking about Polish whores and Yiddish devils,' said Allan Nadler, director of Jewish studies at Drew University and former director of research at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research" ("Dissent Greets Isaac Bashevis Singer Centennial," *New York Times*, June 17, 2004).

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with the formidable figure of the Jew as intellectual, at once intimidating and challenging. Above all, I began to teach myself about the Holocaust, an event whose import cannot be comprehended merely by reading *The Diary of Anne Frank* in high school.

Piece by piece, I was filling in additional sections of the puzzle, yet they remained disconnected in my mind even after I came to New York in 1985 and started writing for Commentary. Something about my Jewish friends continued to elude me—until, one day, I picked up a paperback copy of *Enemies, a Love Story*.

I had previously seen and liked the film of this novel, but for some reason it had not inspired me to read anything by Singer, with whose writings I was totally unfamiliar. Only after I saw an essay about Singer by Joseph Epstein did it occur to me to look at the book on which *Enemies* was based.* Epstein wrote of how Singer's fiction had put him in touch with his own Jewish background. My curiosity piqued, I bought *Enemies* and opened it to the brief author's note on the first page, where I read these eye-catching words: "Although I did not have the privilege of going through the Hitler Holocaust. . . ."

That was when I started at last to understand.

To Wasps, Jewish humor is mostly a closed book, by turns incomprehensible and embarrassing. Thus, I was surprised to find how quickly I took to it after I moved to New York—not the sanitized kind, much less the crudely anti-Semitic jokes I had occasionally heard in Missouri, but the blunt, close-to-the-knuckle stories rarely told by anyone other than Jews themselves. They were for me what Russian jokes were for Ronald Reagan. And while no other brand of humor is more ethnically specific, stories like the one about the rabbi who converts to Christianity, becomes a minister, and begins his first sermon with the words "Fellow goyim, . . ," made perfect sense to me. To be sure, I might not have been able to explain why they were funny, but by some mysterious leap of sympathy I managed to divine much of their emotional charge.

What I responded to in these jokes was not so much their ethnic content, of which I had a limited comprehension, as their unvarnished irony (irony, like garlic, being a scarce commodity in small midwestern towns). The *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* defines irony as "a contradictory or ill-timed outcome of events as if in mockery of the fitness of things." Who better to relish such mockery than the victims of the Holocaust? So when I first encountered Isaac Bashevis Singer's description of the Holocaust as a "privilege," I shuddered—but I also sensed that a man capable of saying such a thing might be able to tell me what I wanted to know about Jews.

I read *Enemies, a Love Story* with mounting excitement, following it with the one-volume collection of stories that had been published in 1982. After that I gobbled down a half-dozen novels, finding myself most deeply impressed by *Satan in Goray* (1935, trans. 1955), a tale of a false messiah set in 17th-century Poland, and *Shadows on the Hudson* (1958, trans. 1998), set in New York City and Miami Beach not long after World War II. By then I suspected that Singer was to be a lifelong preoccupation, so I restricted my intake, rationing his remaining books in the way I had once doled out Trollope and Henry James, putting off for as long as possible the dreaded day when there would be no more new ones left (among other things, I have yet to read any of his books for children).

But when the Library of America set came out, I declared a holiday and marched through all three volumes nonstop. Some of the stories I knew from the 1982 collection, but many more were new to me, and by the time I had read them all I was as excited as the day I first laid eyes on *Enemies*.

Total immersion in so extensive an oeuvre has a way of heightening your perception of an author's work. Though I already knew my way around what I think of as Singerland fairly well, reading nearly 200 of his stories in a brief period of time caused their common features to stand out in still higher relief. One important thing of which this experience reminded me is that Singer, although he can be very, very funny, is not a "comic" writer in the ordinary sense of the word.

"The only difference between comedy and tragedy is the point of view," said the film director Howard Hawks, a remark that sheds much light on the nature of Singer's humor—as well as on Jewish humor in general. For just as the best Jewish jokes steer so close to the truth that they sting, so does Singer display his two milieux, the *shtetl* and the world of modernity, through a thick scrim of irony that makes it all but impossible to tell the difference (if there is one) between comic and tragic occurrences.

"Gimpel the Fool," the story that first brought Singer to the attention of English-speaking readers, is a locus classicus of the sleight of hand with which he turns comedy into tragedy and back

* "Our Debt to I. B. Singer" (Commentary, November 1991).

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again. Of course you laugh at Gimpel, that poor schlemiel and most preposterous of fictional cuckolds, who blindly accepts the lamest of excuses from his whorish wife Elka. How could one not find him laughable? But his climactic utterance, though identical in tone to everything that has gone before, could hardly be more different in its effect:

> No doubt the world is entirely an imaginary world, but it is only once removed from the true world. At the door of the hovel where I lie, there stands the plank on which the dead are taken away. The gravedigger Jew has his spade ready. The grave waits and the worms are hungry; the shrouds are prepared—I carry them in my beggar's sack. Another schnorrer is waiting to inherit my bed of straw. When the time comes I will go joyfully. Whatever may be there, it will be real, without complication, without ridicule, without deception. God be praised: there even Gimpel cannot be deceived.

This aspect of Singer's writing was what touched me most deeply. The local color I had encountered elsewhere, and in any case it evoked no ancestral memories of a lost world. What gripped me was not the strangeness of exterior detail, but the strangeness of his people. Undaunted by century upon century of persecution, they told the terrible truth about their suffering—and laughed at it. Stranger still, I found myself laughing with them, and when I myself finally learned from hard experience that death is the ultimate fate of loved ones and strangers alike, I realized why. We cannot all have the "privilege" of going through the Holocaust, but sooner or later each of us must turn his face to the wall, and what could be funnier than our absurd attempts to pretend otherwise?

THE RESIDENTS of Singerland are forever being tempted by demons. What is more, they almost always succumb to these temptations, and suffer appalling torments as a result. You would think this unending cycle of temptation and torment would be no laughing matter, but Singer typically writes of it (often in the voice of Satan himself) with the same grim glee he brings to his portrayals of lesser agonies. No less jolting is the fact that punishment appears to be meted out equally among the just and unjust. Even the holiest of men may find themselves besieged by the Evil One in a Singer story—and they are hardly less likely to lose the battle.

Who are these demons? For what malign force do they stand? That Singer saw them as metaphors is all but certain. He was, in his own words, "full of faith and full of doubt," a notion on which he expanded eloquently in *Shadows on the Hudson*:

> Whether he wanted to or not, a Jew perpetually had accounts to settle with the Almighty: he praised Him or blasphemed Him, loved Him or hated Him, but he could never be free of Him. . . . Whenever a Jew imagined that he was fleeing from God, he was in reality turning blindly in circles like a donkey in a mill or a caravan lost in the desert. Actually, this was true of the whole of humankind. One could as easily free oneself of the concept of God as one could free oneself of time, space, causality. The good and the just, the true and the omnipotent had to be indwelling somewhere.

Singer's credo, such as it was, stopped well short of belief in the literal existence of demons, and probably a good deal shorter than that. One thing he never doubted, however, was that by unleashing secular modernity on the world, the philosophers of enlightenment had left humankind defenseless against the "demons" of the self. In "A Tale of Two Liars," Satan saps the will of a repentant sinner by speaking to him "after the fashion of the philosophers, and shortly his lips had lost their inclination to pray." Those who cannot pray to God find some other god to worship, and for naive children of the Haskalah, that god was rationalism.

Singer's contemporaries had eagerly embraced all manner of rationalistic schemes for improving the world, foremost among them Soviet Communism. Not so Singer himself, who from childhood onward seems to have sensed that there were "just as many questions to be asked of Reason as there were of God." Although many critics suppose that his dark view of modernity was shaped solely by the Holocaust, as early as the 1930's, in *Satan in Goray*, he was using the havoc wrought by 17th-century Sabbatianism as a symbol of the destructive effects of that falsest of messiahs, the god of reason.*

Throughout his writings, indeed, Singer presents Nazism and Communism not as greater and lesser heresies but as coequally evil twins, referring to "the Hitler and Stalin years" as if they were a single historical event—which, from his point of

* Ruth R. Wisse's interpretation of *Satan in Goray* is especially acute: "But more than the tactics of any one political group, the book exposes the phenomenon of 'applied messianism' that devours the very hopes it feeds upon. . . . Evil is never so powerful as when it claims to be redemptive; redemption is never so persuasive as when it follows great suffering; no suffering will compare with the consequence of 'forcing the end' of history. The Jews' experience becomes a parable for all such revolutionary ecstasies."

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view, they were. Life in Warsaw had shown him how fatally susceptible his fellow Jews were to the millenarian visions he distrusted; after the war, the proof of their folly was brought home to him in as brutal a fashion as possible when he learned that his mother and his younger brother had frozen to death building log huts in the Soviet Gulag.

Yet Singer was no literary politician, and his critique of modernity was at heart moral and spiritual, not political. "In our home, the 'world' itself was *treif*," he recalled in the beautiful collection of essays about his Polish childhood that he called *In My Father's Court* (1966). "Many years were to pass before I began to understand how much sense there was in this attitude." First in prewar Warsaw, then in America, he beheld the world in all its unclean splendor, and set down his impressions with acrid humor. As his narrator observes in "The Third One," a story set in New York:

> Over a movie house hung a billboard of a half-naked woman four stories high, lit up by spotlights—her hair disheveled, her eyes wild, her legs spread out, a gun in each hand. Around her waist was a fringed scarf that covered her private parts. A mob had collected to gape at her. Men made jokes, women giggled. I looked at Zelig. Half his face was green, the other red—like a modern painting. He stared, moved his lips, one eye laughing and one tearing. I said to him, "If there is no God, she is our god."
>
> Zelig Fingerbein shook as if he had been awakened from a trance. "What *she* is promising she can deliver."

How are we to keep from being seduced by such temptations? By faith alone—a faith Singer thought could only be preserved within the protective carapace of a culture of religious orthodoxy such as the one in which he had lived as a boy. Yet that world, he also knew, was gone forever, spiritually sickened unto death by the Haskalah and then murdered outright by Hitler and Stalin. This is the source of the paradox that animates his writings, in which faith is portrayed as both indispensable and impossible.

For me, to read so many of Singer's short stories at one time was to be struck by how much they have in common with the stories of Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964), another fictional chronicler of a closed, insular culture. O'Connor's culture is that of the American South, and many of its inhabitants are preoccupied to the point of obsession with the problem of faith. Hazel Motes, the anguished protagonist of *Wise Blood* who preaches the gospel of the Church Without Christ, would have felt perfectly at home in certain corners of Singerland.

Yet O'Connor's Christ-haunted characters differ profoundly from Singer's demon-infested Jews. In O'Connor, unbelievers living in a fallen world tainted by modernity suddenly find themselves irradiated by grace, but, like Hazel Motes or the murderous character Misfit in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," they struggle in vain against its revelatory power. In Singer's world, by contrast, there are no sudden revelations, only the unquenchable desire to believe, against all evidence to the contrary, that life has meaning. And there, in the nagging suspicion that it does not, lies the sharpest tooth of his humor. Asked if God is the First Cause, a character in "The Warehouse" replies, "Who else is the First Cause? He is a jealous God. He would never delegate such power. But being the cause and keeping order are different things altogether."

If one had to sum up Singer's theology in a single sentence, that last one would do as well as any. True, this also marks the point where a believing Christian would have to say: in the end, it is O'Connor who more accurately describes things as they are. Still, one need not be a Jew, or an unbelieving Gentile, to be drawn to the tough-minded honesty with which Singer confronts the impenetrable mystery of what can easily be interpreted as God's indifference, even malevolence. Much of what happens in the visible world is, after all, unintelligible, save in the light of the unswerving faith that few who have been touched by modernity can claim. Even without the Holocaust and the Gulag to tip the scales, it was hard enough to trust in the goodness and mercy of God. Now it takes the certainty of a saint.

Unsaintly and unsure as I am, I find Singer's Jewish refusal to prettify the cold, hard facts of human nature and human history to be oddly comforting. Reading him, and thinking about him, I am reminded of a passage by C.S. Lewis about the power of art to let us see beyond ourselves: "In reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself." No, you do not have to be Jewish to appreciate the harsh consolations of Jewish humor. It is, after all, nothing more than a distinctive perspective on what Singer himself called "the timeless catastrophe to which one never becomes accustomed"—the "catastrophe," that is, in which God has chosen to implicate Jew and Gentile alike. We are all in the same lifeboat together, and we might as well laugh as we row for the farther shore.

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The Axman Cometh

Joseph Epstein

Linguet was a sort of literary freelancer, of whom there were so many then, needy and audacious, in a great hurry to make a name and convinced there was no better means of drawing attention to himself than of tilting against accepted opinions. . . . Poor wretch! Some years later he had to witness the massacres of September [1793] and himself perished on the scaffold.

—Gaston Boissier

I SING of hatchet jobs: of criticisms intended to kill, or at least to maim, the reputations of cultural figures, primarily though not exclusively writers. Hatchet jobs have less to do with fairness than with anger, contempt, or ridicule, brought on by extreme dislike. The hatchet man takes broad strokes in order to cut deep.

In English literary history, hatchet jobs go back at least as far as the Earl of Rochester, John Dryden, and Alexander Pope—to a time (the 17th and 18th centuries) when one could be devastatingly cruel in beautifully composed heroic couplets and when a writer's politics, economic status, physical features—all—were up for assault. In our time, hatchet men tend to concentrate their cruelty on a writer's actual words on the page. This much, but little other, progress can be reported.

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Hatchet men tend, or at least tended, to turn up with some regularity, like young gunfighters in saloons of the old West, in hopes of making a name by killing off writers of larger, better established reputations than their own. In these pallid days of political and literary correctness, their number seems to have dwindled, which may be why there is so much excitement when a new one appears, guns a-blazing. Such is the case with Dale Peck, hatchet man *du jour*. Peck's attacks on other writers, originally written for the *Village Voice*, the *New Republic*, and the *London Review of Books*, brought him sufficient publicity to earn a full-dress profile in the *New York Times Magazine*, and now they have been collected in the appropriately titled *Hatchet Jobs: Cutting Through Contemporary Literature*.*

As a blurbologist, or close student of the endorsements that crowd the back covers of books, I find myself torn up with envy that Peck's publisher has managed to secure a blurb on *Hatchet Jobs* from Susan Sontag. She writes: "Dale Peck emboldens and makes me laugh." To draw laughter from this most humorless and self-dramatizing of our contemporary intellectual divas—well, one might as easily force Fred Astaire to sit out the last dance, or enroll Louis Farrakhan in a course in Western Civilization. As a successful blurb ought to do, Susan Sontag's piqued my interest.

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What evoked her laughter can only be the deep nastiness of Dale Peck's eviscerations of contemporary writers. "Eviscerations" turns out to be a bit of a euphemism; flaying, roasting, and drawing-and-quartering comes closer to what Peck does. When he is through, you can send the oeuvre to the morgue, no autopsy necessary. The body parts have been cleanly severed, the vitals and entrails neatly set out, sliced, diced, and ready for freezer paper.

I had previously looked at some of Peck's fiction but, until now, none of the take-no-hostages criticism for which he has become more famous—apparently to his chagrin. In the introduction to *Hatchet Jobs*, he declares that he is going out of the literary scorched-earth business: "As soon as I finish this introduction, I am throwing away my red pen." Before doing so, he bequeaths us his vicious judgment of David Foster Wallace, Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, and others among the abstract inexpressionist novelists; of the entire generation of British Empire fictioneers that includes Julian Barnes, Salman Rushdie, Margaret Drabble, and Martin Amis; of Philip Roth, Jim Crace, Colson Whitehead, Stanley Crouch, and others.

Not a light-touch man, Peck can begin a piece by remarking that "Rick Moody is the worst writer of his generation." Sometimes he will attack a writer on a single point: Philip Roth's novel *American Pastoral*, for example, gets a going-over just for what Peck sees as its misogyny. (I myself would have thought Roth's main weakness has been his lingering Freudianism, with sex supplying the central drama in his work.) In other cases he uses a buckshot approach, firing away at every weakness he can find. He can also be intensely personal: a memoir by the critic Sven Birkerts receives a dismantling so extreme as to imply it were better Birkerts's parents had given the matter more thought before conceiving him.

In everything he writes, Peck quickly establishes his own superiority to his subjects, making it plain that he is smarter, subtler, deeper than they, with a wider and longer view of literary creation. Often he is justified in this; he is not without talent. He is also fearless, and unslowed by political correctness: he is willing to attack black women writers, though not always, to my mind, the ones he should. (Alice Walker and Toni Morrison get passes in his pages.) And he can be entertaining, in part out of a willingness to say things so rough that one winces while one giggles.

Peck has lowered the gauge of literary decorum beyond anything I have encountered. He refers to T. S. Eliot's "top-hat-and-tails way of saying f__ you." Or he will write: "Gore Vidal, who's sucked more than a few d__s in his life and been taken to task for it. . . ." He suggests that David Foster Wallace would do well "to shut off his goddamn word processor" and find someone to sodomize him vigorously. (By their tropes ye shall know them; Peck is forthrightly gay.) This sort of thing, as the announcer Don Meredith used to say about brutal plays on *Monday Night Football*, will get your attention, Howard.

But Peck is entertaining only up to a point. He is too relentless to be truly effective, and lazy editors have let him run on at great length about writers who are not really worthy of the energy he brings to destroying them. And then there is the question of what he is for. Your standard hatchet man will never avow that he actually enjoys beating up writers in print for the sheer pleasure of it; that would make him a sadist, instead of the savior for whom he wishes ultimately to be taken. He has to have something on which to base, and justify, his vehemence. Sometimes the something is politics, either partisan or cultural: this or that writer is on the other side of the divide from me, and therefore he must die. Often there is an implicit appeal to standards: the hatchet man has seen truth and beauty, while the poor author, roasting on his spit, must be instructed on his folly before he expires.

Dale Peck does not really invoke high standards as a reason for picking up the hatchet; a man who seems to admire Kurt Vonnegut, Alice Walker, and Norman Mailer is not in a strong position to do that. Instead, he claims a love of the novel as a form, and a hatred of its misuse in even talented hands. His specialty as a critic-prosecutor is literary malpractice. "Bad writers," he says, "can't do [the novel] much damage because they'll simply be ignored, but a self-indulgent writer with a single compelling skill can do incalculable harm." What he most wants to do, he asserts, is to save literature for his own age-mates. (He is thirty-seven.) "These reviews," he writes, "if not as direct as a coffee klatsch (or barroom brawl), are, I hope, some kind of dialogue with my generation."

What the dialogue is about, presumably, is his belief that he and his generation have inherited the double dead-end of "recherché postmodernism and recidivist realism—and both of them, in my opinion, suck." The great villain here is James Joyce, who deserted "The Dead" and the other beautifully controlled short stories of

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Dubliners for *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and, worse, the self-indulgent sprawl of *Ulysses*. Peck would also toss overboard "the incomprehensible ramblings of Faulkner and the sterile inventions of Nabokov," and all other writers too greatly pleased by the tricks they can do with language and too little impressed with the complex reality that life presents. These, according to him, run all the way from Joyce through "the word-by-word wasting of a talent as formidable as Pynchon's" to the "stupid—just plain stupid—tomes of DeLillo."

Emphatic as Peck is about the direction in which he does not want the novel to go, he is utterly vague about the way he wishes it would go. At one point he remarks that "a writer should describe what's wrong with the world"; then he adds that "embedded in every story, every poem, every play is a utopian vision that, if achieved, would make the words irrelevant, redundant, unnecessary." Literature, he goes on, "is first and foremost an attack on life . . . an act of revenge that aspires to elegy."

Reading such vapidities, one longs for a Dale Peck to come along and blow them up. Besides, the opposite is more nearly the case: unlike critical writing, superior imaginative writing begins not in vengefulness or anger but where anger ends, in the tranquility needed to describe the world in as much of its richness as a writer can capture and in a version as close to itself as it really is. The angry writers, the Arthur Millers, the E.L. Doctorows, the Toni Morrisons, the Edward Albees, are the ones furthest from supplying the peculiar satisfactions of literature.

Dale Peck rattles on about the calculated unfairness of his own hatchet jobs, and this rattling, like his repeated perpetration of hatchet jobs themselves, betrays a mind ill at ease. His work in this vein is strong enough to have won him some reputation as a killer, but it is not fully enough developed to educate readers' minds, to change the direction of contemporary fiction, or even substantially to alter the reputations of the writers he despises. The literary equivalent of an insult comic, he belongs, as the English critic F.R. Leavis said about the Sitwells, more to the history of publicity than to that of poetry.

CAN THE job be done better? As one who has both wielded the hatchet and felt its blade on his neck, I believe it can, while acknowledging that, even at their best, hatchet jobs deal only with imprecise truth. They need not arrive at a careful balance—they have, in fact, nothing to do with balance. Where a regular critical estimate of a writer might find five strong and nine weak points, ending in a negative judgment, a hatchet job will find fourteen weak and, at most, one strong point, and the strong point will usually turn out to make the writer, somehow, even worse.

Not long after he died, I wrote what I intended to be a hatchet job on the philosopher Mortimer J. Adler. A month or so after its appearance in print, someone wrote to me that, when Adler was younger, he had made serious contributions to the study of the thought of Thomas Aquinas, something I had neglected to emphasize. True enough. But because I was trying to highlight Adler's pomposity, the comic distance between his thought and reality, I felt no need to make more than passing mention of his standing among Aquinas scholars, just as I failed to acknowledge the fact that, so far as I knew, he had never dried his hands on the back of his dog.

From the standpoint of career, the performance of a superior hatchet job can put a young writer on the literary screen. Norman Podhoretz first became well known when in 1953 he attacked Saul Bellow's much-praised novel, *The Adventures of Augie March*. To this day, the only piece of writing I can recall by the critic Theodore Solotaroff was a fine piece of hatchetry from the early 1960's on the now forgotten but then immensely popular Harry Golden, the author of *Only in America* and *For Two-Cents Plain*. I first noticed the writer Renata Adler when she wrote an attack on Irving Howe and Norman Podhoretz in the *New Yorker*. Although not then a young man, Irving Howe once published a dissection of Philip Roth that so riled its object that he, Roth, retaliated in a full-length novel lampooning a Howe-like character named Milton Appel.

Some writers begin as hatchet men and never fight free of it. Dwight Macdonald, who wrote brilliantly entertaining assaults on the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s "Great Books" project, on the New English Bible, and on the novelist James Gould Cozzens, besides much slashing movie criticism, once remarked that "every time I say Yes I get into trouble." By this Macdonald meant that his enthusiasms, political and cultural, were not to be trusted, and in this he was correct: without his handy hatchet, Macdonald was a writer of negligible interest.

Some writers are known chiefly for their attack mode, no matter how many other forms they attempt. Mary McCarthy is perhaps the only American woman to qualify as a serious hatcheteer; in fiction and non-fiction alike, hers was largely a destructive talent, inert and inept unless on the of-

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fensive. John Simon, a critic who has done his fair share of praising, is nonetheless known chiefly as a hatchet man. So, too, was a now-deceased writer for the *Hudson Review* named Marvin Mudrick, who was hell on anything written after the 18th century. Among contemporary polemicists, Christopher Hitchens is a fairly dab hand at the political hatchet job, while James Wolcott, who writes chiefly for *Vanity Fair*, is something of a non-partisan, equal-opportunity hatchet man whose cultural and political predispositions appear to be of less importance to him than his taste for ridicule and free-floating malice.

I was Wolcotted many years ago, in the pages of the *New Republic*. The occasion was a book of mine called *Ambition* that Wolcott claimed was essentially a fake, a trumped-up, pumped-up (I recall his mention of a bicycle pump) work. I read his attack in a trance-like blur, with a feeling of anger and humiliation and impotence, sorely regretting that dueling had been outlawed in the United States. I got over it. For a writer, as Mencken said, injustice does not finally hurt; only justice does.

So few good books, so much time, might be the motto of the hatchet man. Time is needed to compose a proper hatchet job, which is why such work customarily falls to the young. Someone by now should long ago have killed off Joyce Carol Oates, or E. L. Doctorow, but the problem is that one has to read their vast outpourings of print, and only the young have the time to waste. Joan Didion's reputation continues to flourish for no discernible reason apart from her anti-Americanism and elliptical existentialism; she, too, seems ready for a serious chop-up. When I was the editor of the *American Scholar*, I tried to commission a hatchet job on the vogue of deconstruction, which was then sweeping university literature departments; the unsolved (by me) problem was to find somebody both highly intelligent and devilishly clever who would be willing to read through all that gunk and properly explode it.

The most adept hatchet jobs in my lifetime were written by the English historian H.R. Trevor-Roper on his fellow historians Lewis Namier, A.J.P. Taylor, and above all Arnold Toynbee. The Toynbee job appeared in print in the mid-1950's, when Toynbee's multivolume *Study of History* was riding high, its author on the cover of *Time*, his work everywhere acclaimed as the product of genius. Trevor-Roper made it seem instead the work of a pathetic and ignorant egomaniac, not a chronicle of Western decline as it pretended to be but a religious Prophecy with its author as Prophet. "I am interested in the character, not the content of [Toynbee's] work," Trevor-Roper wrote; "and I am interested in it because, fundamentally, I find it not merely erroneous—that is not a matter for emotion—but hateful." Trevor-Roper's depth charge blew Toynbee and his ten-volume history out of the water. The work and its author sank quite without trace and neither one is much spoken of today.

Hatchet jobs, then, may be unbalanced. But that does not mean that they are either unnecessary or unjust. Literary reputations are sometimes wildly inflated; log-rolling in literary circles is often standard procedure; political correctness frequently allows writers to be admired for all the wrong reasons. A hatchet job can make the necessary adjustments.

In the case of two of my own more recent "hits," on the literary critics Harold Bloom and George Steiner, what gave me energy for the attack was the extreme pretension of both men to genius, their abiding humorlessness, and their self-adulation as exceptionally sensitive souls living in exceptionally dark times. The fact is that each of them, as my dear commonsensical father might have put it, seemed to be making a very nice living without having to leave the house.

Why should I care if such men wish to pose as impossibly erudite and darkly anguished? Or if some novelist or poet's work is praised well beyond what I regard as the bounds of literary justice? The fact is, I do care. Riled up sufficiently, I take on the role of the federal marshal: I pin on my badge, saddle up, and ride out after the varmints. The pay isn't great, but as the supply of inflated reputations never seems to dwindle, one need never worry about running out of work.

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ART

Modigliani à la Mode

Steven C. Munson

BACK IN 1980, when I was a young editor at the *New York Times Magazine*, I commissioned a profile of the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), a radical-Left think tank located in Washington, D.C. In the course of doing his research, the writer I had recruited sent me a few copies of a journal called *Race and Class*, which was then being published by the Transnational Institute, an Amsterdam-based affiliate of IPS.

Race and Class contained what at the time seemed to be one kooky article after another in which topics both weighty and trivial were analyzed through a prism that reduced politics and culture to little more than a manifestation of the inherent and irreducible conflicts among economic, ethnic, and sex-based social categories. Little did I realize as I perused this obscure publication that, within the next several years, its neo-Marxian brand of theorizing would find its way first to intellectual respectability and then to widespread acceptance in the academic community and beyond, giving rise to the phenomena that have since become known as political correctness, multiculturalism, and identity politics.

It need hardly be said that the institutions of the art world, like other arenas of intellectual or cultural endeavor, have been profoundly affected by this radical perspective. Indeed, some curators and art historians have embraced and applied it with relish. The consequence has been a thoroughgoing historical revisionism aimed at bringing our understanding and appreciation of art works of the past into line with the "politically correct" (for now) present.

So it is, unfortunately, with the exhibition *Modigliani: Beyond the Myth*, on view at the Jewish Museum in New York City until September 19. This show, which has been a big hit, comprises two separate experiences. There are, first and foremost, the artist's paintings, drawings, studies on paper, and sculptures, numbering over 100 objects in all. Then there are the catalogue essays.

The paintings consist of portraits and nudes, the two subjects to which Modigliani famously dedicated his art. Of the sculptures, which are mostly grouped together in a separate room, one piece in particular, *Head* (1912), deserves special attention, since its highly stylized form, an elongated oval head with a pointed chin resting on a cylindrical elongated neck, is the primary form the artist used in many of his best portraits.

In fact, Modigliani originally intended to be a sculptor, but was prevented from pursuing this ambition full-time by the physically demanding nature of the work and by his ill health. But if it was to painting that he ultimately devoted most of his artistic energy, the influence of sculpture was critical in shaping his painterly vision and in driving his passion.

THAT PASSION he had discovered early on, as a youth in Tuscany. The fourth child of Flaminio Modigliani and Eugenie Garsin, Amedeo Modigliani was born in the port city of Livorno on July 12, 1884. His parents, Sephardic Jews, both came from good families, although his father's business fortunes—he was mainly in mining—were in decline at the time of Amedeo's birth, and making ends

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meet was something of a struggle for his mother. At one point, in order to support the extended family that had moved in with the Modiglianis, she went into business herself, offering English and French lessons. And in line with her own family's tradition (her mother, Regine Spinoza, claimed to be related to the philosopher whose name she shared, and her father spoke six languages), she saw to it that Amedeo and his older siblings got a classical education.

She also seems to have given her son a measure of her personality. Raised in a cosmopolitan household, with a Protestant governess, and educated in a Catholic school in Marseilles, she was evidently known for her tolerant and open-minded outlook. In his 1992 monograph on Modigliani, Christian Parisot quotes a friend of the artist writing about him in 1931, eleven years after his death:

> His phrases were well-rounded, and he spoke beautiful French. His laugh was short and dry. He was a fair and good man who flattered no one. I have never known anyone so entirely free from snobbery. . . . Despite his courteousness (and he was very courteous), he was obliged several times to say some harsh words. He uttered them without flinching.

His mother's empathetic relationship with her son was revealed in her diary, again quoted by Parisot:

> Dedo [Modigliani's childhood nickname] has suffered terribly with pleurisy, and I am still not over the shock. The child's character is not yet formed enough for me to comment on it. His manners are those of a spoiled but not unintelligent child. We shall see later on what this chrysalis contains. An artist perhaps?

This question would be definitively answered by the spring of 1899. As his mother recorded in her diary, "Dedo has totally abandoned his studies [in regular school] and does nothing but paint. He paints all day and every day with an unflagging enthusiasm which astounds and delights me. If this is not the way to success, nothing is."

Modigliani was then all of fifteen years old. The previous year, he had begun formal art studies in Livorno, which he would later continue in Florence. He had also begun to experience the chronic illness that would weaken him throughout his life. His first bout with pleurisy was followed by one with typhoid; in 1900, he was discovered to have tuberculosis. When he was well enough to travel, his mother took him south; he spent several months visiting Italian cities and museums, steeping himself in the art of antiquity and the Renaissance.

But from a fellow painter he soon learned of the avant-garde developments in Paris, and a few years later, in early 1906, with a little money from his mother, he was able to move to the city that was then germinating the geniuses of 20th-century modernism. Once there, he settled into what would be an unstable life of almost continuous poverty, frequent indulgence in drugs, alcohol, and women, and hard work interrupted by health problems (exacerbated by his dissolute style of life) that would finally kill him in 1920. He had both the good luck and the misfortune of finding a patron, Dr. Paul Alexandre, who hired models for him and helped to promote his career, introducing him to the sculptor Constantine Brancusi, but who was also a strong believer in the mind-expanding powers of hashish.

Brancusi's influence, along with that of Cézanne and of Picasso's cubism, can be seen in the works at the Jewish Museum. But in developing his signature style, Modigliani drew from classical, ancient, and primitive sources as well. His best known works are the seductive, elongated nudes, mostly from 1917, that he painted in the last few years of his life, five of which are at the Jewish Museum.

Modigliani's nudes stand in somewhat the same relation to his head-and-shoulders portraits as do the examples of his three-quarter-length portraits of clothed women, although the latter are lighter and brighter in color and much less heavily worked. Both groups of pictures, with their long, sensuously flowing curved lines, are much looser in composition than the often rigidly painted busts. In both, too, one sees that Modigliani consistently cut the figure off around the knees. For his purposes, it seems, the suggestive power of the female figure was contained in every part of the anatomy except the shins, ankles, and feet.

The nudes, like the clothed portraits, almost completely fill out the canvas, either from top to bottom if the subjects are seated or from side to side if (like four of the five at the Jewish Museum) they are reclining. This, along with his manner of cropping the figure, creates an immediately compelling composition by pushing the model toward the viewer; in *Nude* (1917), there is a not unpleasant sensation that the figure is sliding down and out of her space. But it is the beautiful linearity of the compositions that predominates and that shows, as do the many drawings in the show, Modigliani's primary brilliance as a draughtsman.

His nudes—with their gently elongated torsos and their variously sweet, coy, and smoldering looks, or, if their eyes are closed, their tranquility—have an instantaneous effect on the imagination. The effect is akin to that described by Marcel Proust in *Remembrance of Things Past*, writing about the difference between direct experience and the impact of a fictional rendering of experience:

> A "real" person, profoundly as we may sympathize with him, is in a great measure perceptible only through our senses, that is to say, he remains opaque. . . . The novelist's happy discovery was to think of substituting for those

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> opaque sections . . . things . . . which the spirit can assimilate to itself. After which it matters not that the actions, the feelings of this new order of creatures appear to us in the guise of truth . . . since it is in ourselves that they are happening, that they are holding in thrall . . . our quickened breath and staring eyes.

Modigliani's nudes, which with their distortions of form do not pretend to represent anatomical truth, captivate us by a similar process. And notwithstanding his success in translating the shape and feel of soft female flesh into roughly applied layers of paint, his women are rendered in a highly stylized manner. Besides the way they are posed (which gives a certain flow or rhythm to the lines and curves of their bodies), part of that stylization comes in his treatment of *their* "staring eyes." These are generally painted either as almond-shaped and seemingly blank colored areas, without iris or pupil, or in a sort of "Egyptian" manner—large, darkly outlined, and again almond-shaped. The eyes are often the same size or are much larger than the model's mouth, likewise stylized along with the curved and elongated nose.

The expressiveness of these eyes is remarkable in its range and subtlety. Indeed, what is most striking about the faces of Modigliani's nudes is how he used basically the same forms of stylization over and over again and yet captured individual physical characteristics as well as variations of expression that convey a clear and, one feels, essential truth about the sitter's mood and personality.

This is even truer of his portraits. The many wonderful examples on display at the Jewish Museum include *Leo Indenbaum* (1917), *Antonia* (1915), and *Beatrice Hastings in Front of a Door* (1915), as well as pictures of Max Jacob, Paul Guillaume, and Jeanne Hebutern (who was the artist's mistress and who committed suicide the day after he died).

At the same time, however, one senses how much about the subjects of Modigliani's art is *not* conveyed in these paintings—how much, that is, they suggest that opaqueness of which Proust spoke. One commentator, an admirer of the painter, wrote that his "figures appear to be stiff and static, devoid of movement and psychological expressiveness," adding that, because the "facial expression is so nearly identical in all of them," they should be viewed as "focal masses in a plastic design rather than as representations of the human body." He had a point. But "nearly identical" is not the same as identical. Modigliani himself said that "in order to work, I need a living person before me," and it is certainly true that his art depended on the one-on-one relationship, the empathy, that an artist develops with his model or subject.

But that may also have been one of the limiting factors in Modigliani's art. In looking at *Leopold Zborowski* (1919), for example, one gets the impression that the portrait exists in large part to serve the purpose of following the curving line that begins at the top of the suit-jacket collar and ends, just below the knee, at the bottom of the canvas, generating the figure's harmonious form and volume along the way. There is much pure formal beauty in that line, and there are many such lines in Modigliani's "frozen" paintings in which color is often used very pleasingly. There is, in short, a balance here; but did his subject matter restrain him too much?

There is something faintly academic in the voluptuous *Seated Nude* (1917) and even in the striking *Anna Zborowska* (1917). What seems to be missing is a resolute commitment to the creation of an imagined space for his figures, a problem that can be most clearly seen in *La belle épicière* (1918), in which a seated woman is awkwardly and unconvincingly placed in a Cézannist-style landscape setting with three trees. In general, his oval faces and long necks are the insistent focus of attention. This may have been unavoidable given his approach to portraiture, exemplified by *Pierrot* and *Madame Pompadour*, both from 1915, and *Jean Cocteau* (1917), in which the heads are modeled sculpturally while the rest of the painting seems to play a supporting role, like a "pedestal" made of paint.

Ultimately, then, Modigliani holds us in thrall, but only for a time; then our "staring eyes" search for something more that they cannot find, and our "quickened breath" subsides.

NOT SO, however, the quickened breath of the contributors to the catalogue that accompanies this exhibition. They are on a mission, which they define as overturning the "myth" of Modigliani as a tragic bohemian, and they are undeterred by anything so inconvenient as the true nature of his oeuvre.

Some critics have argued that the romanticization of Modigliani, which followed immediately upon his death at a young age and has never abated, elevates him to a status higher than that to which he is entitled and obscures the fact that he did not reach the summit to which he aspired, namely, the one occupied by Picasso and Matisse. But dealing with this question is decidedly not the purpose of the catalogue essayists. Although this is the first major retrospective of his work in more than a half-century, they seem far less interested in assessing or reassessing Modigliani's achievement than in recasting him in an entirely new role: that of a socially conscious Jewish "conceptualist" whose goal was to "challenge the status quo."

Making the case for this transformation, one essayist, Maurice Berger, indicts Modigliani scholars up until now for ignoring such "sophisticated art-historical methodologies" as "structuralism, neo-Marxism, poststructuralism, and the complex identity-based approaches rooted in feminist, race, gay and lesbian, and psychoanalytical studies." Applying these methodologies, Berger says, would enable art historians to transcend their own

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"sexist and moribund" thinking and get beyond the "idea of the intoxicating power of female beauty," thus locating the true meaning of Modigliani's art in his "social milieu."

In a similar vein, Griselda Pollock sets out to "ask questions of responsibility and meaning . . . from the dual space of contemporary feminist and Jewish studies." Without adding anything to our appreciation or understanding of the artist, she concludes her essay by condemning artistic modernism as an instrument of racial, economic, and sexual exploitation:

> The gender, class, and race politics of the artistic violation of the humanity of female models that was the lingua franca of many modernist studios is a serious issue in any discussion of modernism and the female body. Nor indeed can anyone foreclose the postcolonial critique of European appropriation of the aesthetics of many great cultures under the distorting representation . . . as "primitive". . . . But what do these feminist and postcolonial readings of the heroic saga of Western modernism make us see? They breach the self-serving censorship of sex, power, violence, and art in [earlier] texts . . . and make us think about why modernism needed the sexual body of the othered woman as its central trope of self-transformation and cultural difference.

Here identity politics is mobilized to implicate Modigliani in the "dehumanizing" practices of modernist aesthetics. But the ultimate goal is to find an exit for him, in a supposedly redeeming Jewishness:

> "Modigliani" can then become the name for a particular practice in artistic thinking about carnality, attentiveness, and the modernist struggle for the bodies of art—gendered, undoubtedly, but also in complex plays of personal desire and artistic fascination. I am also suggesting, however, by using the loaded term "carnality," that this practice was inflected by the self-consciousness of being Jewish at that time and place.

What this boils down to is that it is retrospectively unacceptable for Modigliani to have used female models and to have drawn inspiration from non-European art sources—both forms of exploitative practice. Therefore, the only way his reputation can be salvaged is by focusing on his Jewish "identity." Or, to put it another way, since both his most famous subject matter—female nudes—and his use of primitive art forms can only be considered taboo from today's politically correct vantage point, the content of his art must be redefined.

And what is its newly invented and approved content? The press release for the Jewish Museum show says it best:

> Modigliani's exclusive practice of portraiture has become a vehicle for his egalitarian vision, which presented all people equally regardless of their station, and was based on the socialist ideas that were championed during his childhood.

From socialism, it is then but a short step to the cherished stereotype of the broad-minded Jewish revolutionary. As the curator Mason Klein writes, the artist's "body of work represents a set of values that echoes one of the high notes of Sephardic humanism in Italy's long religious history."

Leaving aside the implication of this weird assertion—it was, after all, Italy's long tradition of humanism that molded Modigliani at least as much as, if not more than, his cosmopolitan brand of Jewishness—what does any of this have to do with his art, in which there is no hint of either politics or religion? The fact that his parents were progressive, that his brother was arrested for socialist activities, that he himself, like most artists, may have held left-wing views, and that, after encountering anti-Semitism in Paris, he apparently would go out of his way to call attention to the fact that he was Jewish—these and other personal matters may be interesting, even striking, but they are in no way reflected in his painting and, in truth, are as irrelevant to any serious consideration of his art as is the fact that many of his portrait subjects happened to be Jews.

Even the curator has to acknowledge that, unlike Marc Chagall, Modigliani was never perceived as a Jewish artist. Klein also makes a point of noting that in Livorno, there was no ghetto, and that the assimilated Modigliani's Jewishness was invisible. Nevertheless, he goes on to insist that, in his portraiture, the artist "reclaimed" his Jewishness "from beneath his Gentile mask, as he realized the indelibility of his 'Race.'" This is sheer fabrication, and one can only wonder what Klein thinks gives him the authority to advance it. The overriding motive of his revisionist project appears to be the felt need to redefine and thereby claim Modigliani as a "Jewish" artist. That "Jewish" in this usage is shorthand for "progressive" does not obscure the fact that the end result is to ghettoize him long after his life was over.

While such blinkered and false revisionism may make sense to the curators at the Jewish Museum, the effort itself, to the degree that it is noticed by the art-going public at all, may very well have an effect the reverse of the one intended. The natural response to this kind of identity politicking was well expressed by a woman visiting the exhibit with a group of friends from England who asked me, in a tone both genuinely confused and offended, "Why are they presenting him as a Jewish artist?" An excellent question, the answer to which speaks volumes about the success of the kooky and insidious enterprise I first encountered a quarter-century ago.

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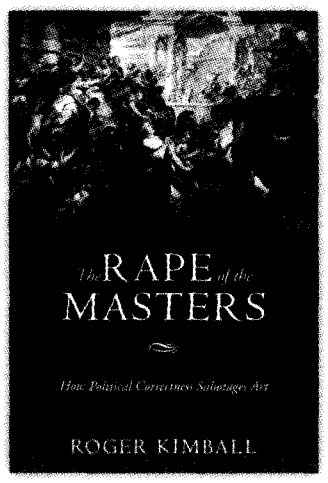
Fall Reading for Culture Warriors

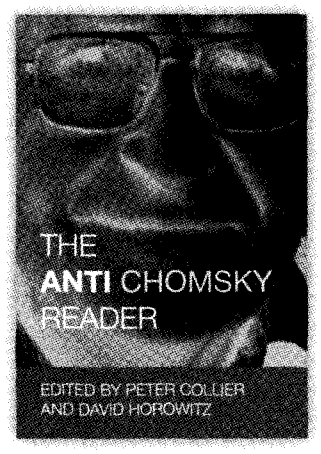


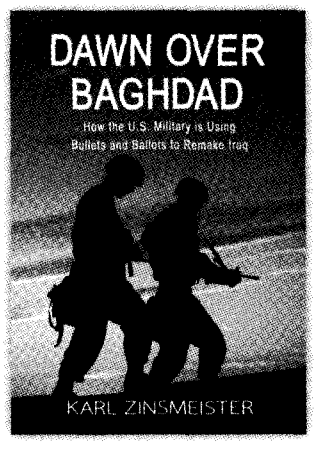
The Rape of the Masters: How Political Correctness Sabotages Art
by Roger Kimball

Essayist and art critic Roger Kimball shows how the discipline of art history is increasingly held hostage by radical cultural politics—feminism, postcolonial studies, deconstructionism, etc. Kimball discusses the fate of eight famous works (all of them reproduced in this book) by artists such as Van Gogh, Courbet, and Rothko and shows how they have been transformed by academic radicalism into metaphors for perverse sexuality, racism, the tyranny of the nuclear family, etc. After describing how great art is routinely debased in our universities, galleries, and museums, Kimball then performs a series of intellectual rescue operations on his eight examples, explaining how these works should be understood in illuminating readings where art, not politics, guides the discussion.

The Anti-Chomsky Reader
Edited by Peter Collier and David Horowitz

Collier and Horowitz have put together a book that analyzes Chomsky's intellectual career and the evolution of his anti-Americanism. ("About time!" was the reaction of one early reader.) The essays in this provocative book focus on subjects such as Chomsky's bizarre involvement with Holocaust revisionism, his obsessive apologies for Khmer Rouge tyrant Pol Pot, and his claim that U.S. policies since WW II, are comparable to Nazism. Chomsky's linguistics is also subject to second thoughts by some of his leading colleagues. The Anti-Chomsky Reader is a fascinating composite portrait of a man whose anti-Americanism has made him a hero abroad and a cult figure at home.





Dawn Over Baghdad: How the U.S. Military is Using Bullets and Ballots to Remake Iraq
by Karl Zinsmeister

Early 2004 Zinsmeister, who had been embedded the previous year with the 82nd Airborne during combat operations in Iraq, rejoined U.S. soldiers occupying the most dangerous parts of the country. In this dramatic book, he takes the reader into Iraq's urban neighborhoods, rural villages, and guerilla snake pits, and shows exactly how young American soldiers are quietly but inexorably choking off a terrorist insurrection and planting the seeds of a new different Iraq. Gripping and perceptive, *Dawn Over Baghdad* is an up-to-the-minute report on America's most urgent national struggle, as seen through the eyes of U.S. servicemen and Iraqis who are in the middle of the most dangerous place in the world.

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Books in Review

Easy Rider

My Life
by Bill Clinton
Knopf. 1008 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
David Frum

REVIEWERS HAVE almost unanimously dismissed Bill Clinton's mammoth book of memoirs as boring. It is easy to see why: much of it is an undigested mass of diary entries, apparently re-dictated without thought or reflection. Old speeches seem to have been pasted in randomly in the same manner.

And yet, if you gird yourself to read the book through, you keep stumbling across odd moments of revelation. Like this one: in the summer of 1971, young Bill Clinton had just taken an important political position as coordinator of Southern states for Senator George McGovern's campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. The trouble was that Clinton's new girlfriend, Hillary Rodham, had accepted a summer job at a law firm in Oakland, California. So Clinton quit the campaign and headed west. "During the day when [Hillary] was at work," he writes, "I walked all over the city, read books in the parks and coffee shops, and explored San Francisco."

Here was Bill Clinton's first major political responsibility—a responsibility he had been given by people who trusted him, a responsibility he had freely accepted—and he shrugged it off to chase a girl and spend his summer in coffee shops. History sometimes really does repeat itself.

The book suffers, too, from even worse faults than turgidity. Again and again Clinton reverts to his old habit of using lawyerly language for purposes of concealment. Here, for example, is his version of the episode in 1998 when a former White House aide, Kathleen Willey, accused him on national television of having kissed and fondled her: "[She] claimed I had made an unwanted advance toward her while she was working in the White House. It wasn't true." By now, any reader who knows anything about Bill Clinton will know enough to ask *what*, precisely, "wasn't true."

Yet on this front as well, *My Life* can surprise you, often agreeably. When he wishes, Clinton can be both frank and lucid in his use of language, and his stories often ring with more truth than presidential autobiographers are accustomed to permit themselves. Here is his account of how he persuaded one Arthur Barbieri, the Democratic boss of New Haven, Connecticut, to endorse George McGovern over the other Democratic contenders in the 1972 primary campaign:

> When I walked into his office and introduced myself, Barbieri was cordial but businesslike. He sat back in his chair with his hands folded across his chest, displaying two huge diamond rings, one big circular one with lots of stones, the other with his

DAVID FRUM, *a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of* The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush *and co-author with Richard Perle of* An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror.

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> initials, AB, completely filled with diamonds. He smiled and told me that 1972 would not be a replay of 1968 [when he was caught off-guard by the Eugene McCarthy campaign], that he had already lined up his poll workers and a number of his cars to take his people to the polls. He said he had dedicated $50,000 to the effort, a huge sum in those days for a town the size of New Haven. I replied that I didn't have much money, but I did have 800 volunteers who would knock on the doors of every house in his stronghold, telling all the Italian mothers that Arthur Barbieri wanted to keep sending their sons to fight and die in Vietnam. "You don't need that grief," I said. "Why do you care who wins the nomination? Endorse McGovern. He was a war hero in World War II. He can make peace, and you can keep control of New Haven."

Barbieri was won over.

Boring and revealing, disingenuous and candid: such contradictions are as typical of Clinton's memoir as they are of Clinton the man. It has been four years since he left office, and we still do not quite know what to make of him. There is the charm that comes through even these dry pages—until it is pierced by mawkish self-pity or a sinister insinuation about one or another political opponent. There is the sprawl and the mess that spoil much of *My Life* as they are said to have hampered Clinton's presidency—and yet within the sloppiness are virtues that never wholly go into eclipse.

My Life is, in brief, the story of a man endowed with an extraordinary gift for making other people like him. As for those otherwise predisposed, toward them Clinton adopts the same attitude that he adopted toward his future father-in-law, who also did not like him at first: "I decided I'd work on him."

In his political life, Clinton's gift for working on people took him all the way from Arkansas to the White House. There, however, the gift lost its power. It had done for him all it could do; that was not enough to make him a great or even a merely effective President.

Once in office, Clinton careered from crisis to crisis, unguided by any fixed purpose. He knew he disliked the racial segregation of the old South—but segregation had vanished long ago, and the cause of civil rights needed no further help from him. He knew he wanted to make sweeping changes in American life—but he was never quite sure what those changes might be, let alone how to bring them about.

At the beginning, of course, there were many who saw a higher purpose in Clinton's ascendancy to the presidency. They saw him as the man who would belatedly realize the blasted dreams of the generation of the 1960's. There were many who feared exactly the same outcome. Both turned out to be wrong. The record of Clinton's presidential initiatives, laid out in tedious detail in this book, shows him to have been, instead, the sort of man Groucho Marx might have been thinking of when he quipped, "Gentlemen, I have my principles. And if you don't like them, I have other principles."

In one way, though, Clinton did achieve an unequivocal success as President. He came to Washington to have a good time—and what a time it was, and how he enjoyed it:

> I took every opportunity I could to bring all kinds of musicians to the White House. Over the years, we had Earth, Wind, and Fire, Yo-Yo Ma, Placido Domingo, Jessye Norman, and many other classical, jazz, blues, Broadway, and gospel musicians. . . . For the entertainment, we usually had room to invite more guests than could be accommodated at the dinner. Afterward, anyone who wanted to stay returned to the foyer of the White House for dancing.
>
> . . . .
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> The [White House] mess was a wood-paneled room with good food prepared by Navy personnel. I ordered lunch from it almost every day and enjoyed going down to visit with the young people who worked in the kitchen. Once a week they served Mexican dishes I especially liked.

And so forth. The photo sections of the book resemble some hyperactive teenager's camp bulletin: Bill Clinton with the White House valets. Bill Clinton with his Secret Service detail. Bill Clinton surrounded by adoring voters, by adoring Colombian schoolchildren, by adoring Ghanaians.

AT THE conclusion of *My Life*, Clinton waxes magniloquent: "I wrote this book to tell my story and to tell the story of America in the last half of the 20th century; to describe as fairly as I could the forces competing for the country's heart and mind; to explain the challenges of the new world in which we live." Etc., etc., etc. Clinton the writer indulges in a great deal of this kind of high-flown hokum, just as he did when President. Whether or not he himself believes it, he wants his readers to believe that he was doing something more in the White House than spending his days gabbing with the kitchen staff or eyeing the breasts of the Italian prime minister's second wife. Yes, it was party time; but all the while, he was toiling on that bridge to the 21st century like a John Henry of the age of the Internet.

In fact, Clinton was given one of the easiest rides of any President in history. He arrived in office after other men had ended the cold war and after other policies had propelled the United States into one of the greatest booms in its history; he left before his neglect of fundamental problems, from terrorism to Social Security,

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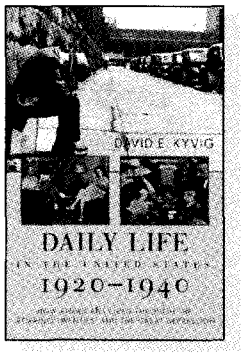
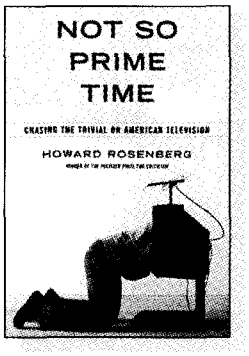
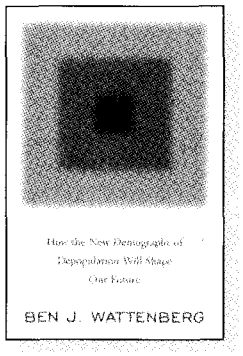
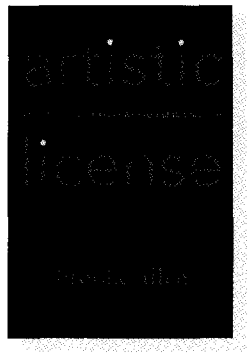
Campaign respites.









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would exact its terrible toll. Dreading decisions, in his first term he flinched from them again and again; then he wasted his second term because he could not discipline his appetites or honestly confront his own actions. No chief executive since Warren Harding has brought more derision and disrespect upon the presidency.

But, as always, there is yet another interesting complication. The Bill Clinton story is not over. The same outstanding personal qualities that brought Clinton to the presidency have become relevant again now that he has left it, while the personal deficiencies that hobbled him in office have ceased to matter quite so much now that the nation no longer looks to him to lead it in war or protect it in peace.

Since exiting the presidency, Clinton has generally conducted himself with surprising grace and tact. He has been an articulate and effective spokesman for the United States when he travels abroad, while conspicuously refraining from criticizing his successor. Naturally, he has supported candidates of his own party, but he has largely stayed out of partisan politics. In this he could not have been more different from the only other living Democratic former President, Jimmy Carter, whose speech accepting the 2003 Nobel peace prize—during which Carter denounced on foreign soil the foreign policies of President Bush—may have been the most disgraceful act by an ex-President since John Tyler took a seat in the Confederate Congress.

In *My Life*, Clinton often talks about the process of maturation. Like many members of his generation, he has been late to reach full adulthood—not even being elected President quite got him there. Now, at sixty, he may at last have arrived. And who knows? There may still be important work yet for this gifted man to do, especially if ways can be found to deploy his persuasiveness and charm in the service of his country on the world stage. If that were actually to come about, the day might yet dawn when Americans of all political points of view would be ready to give the contradictory teller of this contradictory tale the affection and respect he has craved above everything else in life.

Middleman

The Missing Peace:
The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace
by Dennis Ross
Farrar Straus Giroux. 839 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Hillel Halkin

It is possible not to see the forest for the trees. It is even possible, by seeing only the trees, to forget that the forest exists. This is true of Dennis Ross's *The Missing Peace*.

Ross, the special U.S. envoy to the Middle East from 1988 to 2000, was as intensely involved in the Middle East "peace process" as anyone in Washington. He was in on it from the beginning, when, under the first Bush administration (previously he had served under President Reagan at the Middle East desk of the National Security Council), he played a role in convening the 1991 Madrid Conference that brought Israeli, Syrian, and PLO-picked Palestinian representatives together publicly for the first time. This conference was, in its own right, a flop, but following the Israeli elections of 1992, which replaced the hard-line Likud government of Yitzhak Shamir with the more flexible Labor government of Yitzhak Rabin, secret Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Syrian negotiations were commenced. These led to the 1993 Oslo Agreement and its aftermath, and to near-agreements between Rabin and Syrian president Hafez el-Assad, and years later, between Assad and Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak.

Ross was a high-level go-between in all of these contacts. One would expect, therefore, that he would both know and tell us a great deal about them, as indeed he does. He quite clearly took copious notes in the course of them, and the tome-sized book he has written has a prodigious amount of detail. One can follow in it, if not on a minute-to-minute then sometimes on an hour-to-hour basis, such abortive marathons as the eight-day Shepardstown negotiations between Israel and Syria in 1999, or the fourteen-day Clinton-Barak-Arafat summit at Camp David a year later. Ross's descriptions of these, even when painting a picture whose broad strokes we are already familiar with, are informative. The material is well-organized and smoothly narrated, and *The Missing Peace* will be a useful reference work for anyone interested in the tortuous ins and outs of Israeli-Arab-American diplomacy in the last years of the 20th century.

As compendious as Ross is on the details, however, he is vague about the larger scheme of things. This is so even though *The Missing Peace* has its "plot," which is a story of good intentions thwarted by weakness: that is, of the genuine desire of Israelis, Syrians, and Palestinians to reach agreements that ran aground in the end on the shoals of hesitancy, pride, stubbornness, suspicion, and mental atavism.

By the early 1990's, Ross holds, Israel, Syria, and the PLO, all weary of their protracted conflict, had sensibly resolved to negotiate on the basis of the "land for peace" formula that guided Israel and Egypt in their treaty of 1979 and that called on Israel to surrender all or nearly all of the territory acquired in the Six-

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HILLEL HALKIN, *who lives in Israel, is a regular contributor to* COMMENTARY *and a columnist for the* Jerusalem Post *and the* New York Sun. *His most recent book is* Beyond the Sabbath River: In Search of a Lost Tribe of Israel.

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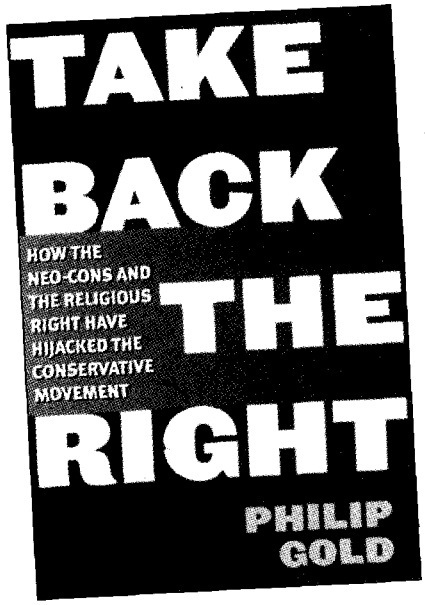
Day war in exchange for diplomatic recognition, normalization of relations, and appropriate security guarantees. The problem lay in negotiating the nuts and bolts of this arrangement, such as exactly where the borders should run, just what security guarantees Israel should be given, precisely what "normalization" should take place and at what stages, and so forth.

And it was here, to the immense frustration of the negotiations' American facilitators, chief among them Ross and President Clinton, that seemingly minor controversies proved impossible to bridge. Thus, as Ross describes it, all that stood in the end between Syria and Israel was a strip of territory on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee no more than a few hundred meters wide, on which neither side would budge. Similarly, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, while agreeing on the general outlines of a settlement, were unable to round trivial corners. For example, although both sides concurred that practical control of Jerusalem's Temple Mount and its mosques should be in Palestinian hands, they were unable to resolve their hairsplitting debates regarding theoretical sovereignty over the site.

Although he tries hard to be fair to everyone, Ross does not shrink from assigning ultimate blame for the failure to make concessions that he thinks should have been made. In the case of Syria and Israel, he believes that this blame falls, first of all, on Hafez el-Assad for his slowness in responding to Yitzhak Rabin's generous offer to withdraw to the June 4, 1967 lines along which the Syrian and Israeli armies were positioned on the eve of the Six-Day war, and at a later stage, on Ehud Barak—who, when Assad finally got around to accepting a package that included the Rabin offer, reneged on it at the last moment. As for the Israeli-Palestinian front, it was Yasir Arafat, according to Ross, whose intransigence was responsible for the collapse of the Camp David talks.

Ross's faulting of Barak over Syria is an example of how *The Missing Peace* concentrates almost entirely on the practical side of the peace-process negotiations to the exclusion of the larger issues they were about. This starts with the book's unquestioning approval, as if it were not only the legitimate but the brave thing to do, of the secret promise made by Rabin to Washington, without consulting his own cabinet or government, to withdraw to the June 4 lines. Indeed, Ross writes, confirming stories that have long circulated to this effect, when Foreign Minister Shimon Peres became prime minister of Israel after Rabin's death



A MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE BY A REBEL OF THE RIGHT

PHILIP GOLD
President of Aretéa

In 2002, Philip Gold, an influential advocate for conservative causes, became one of the first conservatives to oppose President Bush's invasion of Iraq. Then a senior fellow in national security affairs at the Discovery Institute, he gave up his post and broke with the movement entirely.

His book is a personal odyssey, charting how a poor Jewish kid from Pittsburgh supported Barry Goldwater, then clung to his ideals over the next forty years. Ultimately, Gold shows that he didn't abandon conservatism; conservatism abandoned him. Gold believes the movement can be redeemed, but it will have to be transformed into something very different than it is now. His book shows how that transformation can be accomplished.

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he was startled to discover he had inherited such a commitment.

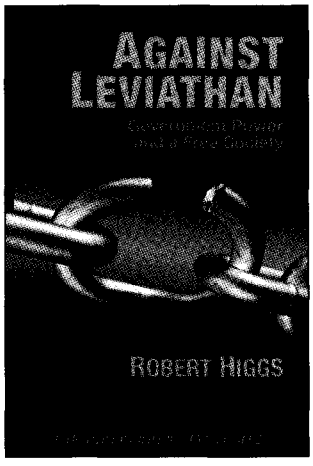
And yet Ross does not ask once whether it was not in fact wildly irresponsible of Rabin, as a democratically elected leader, to have made this commitment, which ran totally against both official Israeli policy and Israeli public opinion. Nor does he discuss the fundamental unreasonableness of the Syrian demand for an Israeli pullback to the June 4 lines. These lines were not the recognized international border between the two countries, which had been drawn between British Mandate Palestine and French Mandate Syria in 1923. Rather, they reflected the military facts on the ground on the eve of the Six-Day war, when the Syrian army controlled dozens of square kilometers of territory, designated by the 1949 armistice agreement as a demilitarized zone, on the western or Israeli side of the frontier; this had already given Syria the strategic high ground of the Golan Heights and left it ten meters from the Sea of Galilee, Israel's main water source.

To this day it is incomprehensible to me why Yitzhak Rabin, upon being told of the Syrian position, did not say to the Clinton administration: "The Syrians refuse to recognize the 1923 line? That's fine with us. You can tell them that we refuse to recognize it, too. We'll be glad to negotiate a new and better border that will give Israel part of the strategic high ground of the Golan and push the Syrians far back from the lakeshore." One can only assume a Rabin so politically desperate to make a deal that he was willing to do what no winner in war had ever done before him, i.e., cede sovereign territory to the loser.

But in any event, why blame Barak, as Ross does, for his cold feet? Why justify, as he also does, the Syrian position? Even if the American negotiators were likewise eager for a deal, would it not be more logical to blame Assad for insisting to the end on getting what no loser in war had ever gotten before him?

This is not, however, the way Ross looks at it. To his way of thinking, Israel made an offer, America worked long and hard to get Syria to accept it, and Israel then withdrew it—hence, Israel is at fault. This is the attitude not of a historian or strategist, but of a specialist in "conflict resolution" whose job consisted of producing agreements irrespective of their nature or whom they served.

This is no doubt why nowhere in Ross's treatment of the Israeli-Syrian track is there any real discussion of such questions as what the military significance of the Golan Heights was for both Israel and Syria; whether



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the agreement nearly reached would have weakened Israel militarily and politically; whether to do so would have been in America's interest; whether an agreement between a democratic state like Israel and a dictatorial one like Syria is good for democracy or for the world if it favors the dictatorship; and whether the Syrian regime ever really wanted peace or simply took a position that it thought Israel would not accept and was dumbfounded by Rabin's acceptance of it. (Hence, Assad's otherwise mysterious procrastination.) In these pages, Ross is like an arbitrator in a labor dispute who is not paid to think about the effects of a pay hike on the national economy.

All this is even truer of Ross's treatment of the Israeli-Palestinian track, where the issues were far more complicated and fraught with consequences. Although many pages in *The Missing Peace* are devoted to the numerous proposals and counterproposals for a border between Israel and Palestine, a solution to the Palestinian refugee question, the disposition of the Jewish settlements, and the final status of Jerusalem, there is not a single sustained analysis of what either side's real motives or needs were in any of these questions, just as there is no examination of whether a Palestinian state—whose eventual creation the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations tended to take for granted—is a desideratum or is likely to prove a stabilizing or destabilizing factor in the Middle East.

Nor does Ross come to grips anywhere with the question of questions, namely: did Arafat and the Palestinian leadership, in signing the Oslo Agreement in 1993, envision a permanent peace with Israel, or did they—as critics of the peace process have repeatedly charged—simply think they were gaining an invaluable beachhead in Israeli-occupied Palestine, over the whole of which, aided by powerful demographic trends in their favor, they would eventually expand their control? Even though there is a considerable body of evidence pointing to the "beachhead" approach as Arafat's strategic conception, Ross declines even to consider the possibility.

The *Missing Peace* is by no means an anti-Israel book, even if it is harsh on some Israeli politicians, particularly Benjamin Netanyahu. On the contrary, Ross, the child of a mixed marriage who has identified unequivocally with the Jewish side of himself (another subject not discussed in *The Missing Peace* is the extraordinary phenomenon that such a person was appointed by two American Presidents as their team captain for Israeli-

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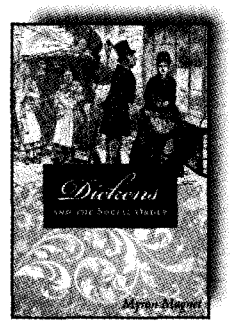

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Arab negotiations), obviously cares deeply about Israel and would not wish to do anything to harm it. His belief that, given the properly worded peace treaties, a Syrian presence meters from the Sea of Galilee and a Palestinian state along Israel's 1967 borders are consistent with Israel's welfare is sincere.

Yet sincerity is not intellectual exertion, and *The Missing Peace* could use some. The lack of it results in a mental flabbiness that, one fears, was not Ross's alone but—at least when it came to the Middle East—the Clinton administration's as a whole. Hard thinking was the missing piece in the American attitude toward Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations; we are fortunate that, with the George W. Bush administration, this deficiency has been largely remedied.

The Church of Reason

Freethinkers:
A History of American Secularism
by Susan Jacoby
Metropolitan Books. 417 pp. $27.50

Reviewed by
Gary Rosen

SUSAN JACOBY completed *Freethinkers* well before the latest outbreak of hostilities in the culture wars, but even without entries in her index for "Gibson, Mel" and "nuptials, same-sex," it is not hard to situate her in the debate. Her enemies are familiar. She bristles at the open religiosity of "the Reverend Bush," who has done everything "short of erecting a cross atop the White House" to show his commitment to "pulverizing" the wall of separation between church and state. She decries the "messianic radicalism" and "disdain for secular government" of Justice Scalia, and she worries that "the apostles of religious correctness" have infused every public issue with "their theological values." By Jacoby's reckoning, these are dark days indeed for those who believe that our affairs should be governed "not by faith in the supernatural but by a reliance on reason and evidence."

An author and journalist with several previous books to her name, Jacoby runs the New York branch of the Center for Inquiry, a group devoted (as its website proclaims) to "secularism, humanism, and skepticism in action." As she sees it, the most urgent task facing today's beleaguered secularists is to recover their lost past. Too few Americans, she laments, know about their freethinking forebears, the bold deists, agnostics, and preachers of godlessness who have scandalized the faithful since the days of George Washington. By rescuing these forgotten freethinkers from the oblivion—the "kooks' corner," the "historical memory hole"—to which they have been relegated by right-wingers and their cultural fellow-travelers, she hopes not only to win recognition for their "noble and essential contributions" but, more important, to revive their fighting creed.

A NUMBER of Jacoby's anti-religious radicals are, in fact, the sort of colorful bit players often overlooked by standard histories. We meet Elihu Palmer, a crusading deist of the early republic, known for his aggressive impiety, like the Christmas-day speech of 1796 in which he derided the story of the Virgin Mary's impregnation by the Holy Spirit, noting that most men would gladly "pretend to be ghosts, if by such pretensions they could obtain similar favors." Then there is Ernestine Rose, a Polish-Jewish émigrée and "ringleted, glove-handed exotic" (as one critic put it) who

GARY ROSEN *is the managing editor of* COMMENTARY.

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stirred up trouble in the 1840's and 50's with her lectures on atheism, abolition, and women's rights. My own favorite is the cartoonist Watson Heston, a Missourian whose *Bible Comically Illustrated* (1892) gave a rudely malicious twist to the idea of taking Scripture literally.

Less obscure, if not exactly a household name, is Robert Green Ingersoll, "the Great Agnostic," who serves as the hero and presiding spirit of Jacoby's account. A Civil War veteran, star of the Republican party, and oratorical powerhouse, Ingersoll gave freethought a legitimacy and reach it had never before possessed. Touring the country in the 1880's and 90's, he spoke to packed houses for hours at a time, ridiculing the doctrines of the churchmen and offering, Jacoby writes, a "coherent secular humanist alternative" to their "authoritarian" views on family life, modern science, artistic freedom, and a range of other subjects. "We are looking for the time when the useful shall be the honorable," declared Ingersoll, in high purple, "and when REASON, throned upon the world's brain, shall be the King of Kings, and God of Gods."

But does this catalogue of lesser-known dissenters add up to an entire suppressed history, a chapter of the American story blotted out, as Jacoby would have it, by the conspiratorial forces of "religious correctness"? Not really. Indeed, most of the characters in Jacoby's diverse pageant of freethinkers are familiar, even famous. Is it news that figures like Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, William Lloyd Garrison, Walt Whitman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Emma Goldman, and Clarence Darrow considered orthodox religion a less than perfectly wholesome influence on American society, or that their provocative views often drew down on their heads the wrath of the faithful? Revisionist history usually delivers more surprises.

Jacoby's true grievance, it seems, is not that the American tradition of freethought is unknown but that it did not last much beyond its turn-of-the-century "golden age." By the 1920's, she writes, the always diffuse movement no longer existed "as a distinct intellectual force in American life." Its place was taken by various leftish causes that, though often at odds with the Church and the churches, "did not have the undermining of institutional religion as their chief goal."

Jacoby mourns the demise of this earlier "uncompromising" brand of anti-religious militancy. But it is unclear why the fading of freethought should be considered so serious a blow for secularism itself or, for that matter, why throughout her book (and in its title) Jacoby uses the two

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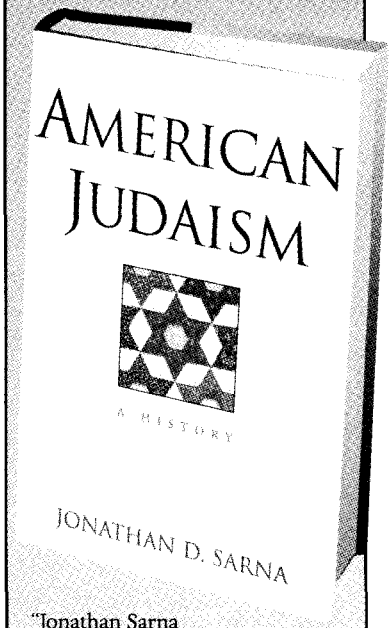

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terms as if they were interchangeable. After all, the turn of the American Left away from freethought was soon followed by what can only be described as a series of secularist triumphs.

Between the deaths of Robert Ingersoll in 1899 and of Clarence Darrow almost 40 years later, Americans who wanted to do battle with Bible-thumpers and flat-earthers may have lost interest in periodicals like the *Truth Seeker*, the most influential organ of freethought, but (as Jacoby recounts) they began to join new organizations like the ACLU. And they started to win as never before, thanks in large part to an ever more accommodating judiciary. Censorship, birth control, school prayer, abortion—all the great 20th-century disputes chronicled by Jacoby in the final chapters of her book end with the forces of traditional religion in unmistakable retreat.

WHY, THEN, Jacoby's stress on the fate of freethought? One reason, no doubt, is personal affinity. Like her hero Ingersoll, Jacoby evinces a dogmatic, almost visceral hostility toward all things religious, even religiously informed moral argument. For her, it is not enough that Americans establish a proper constitutional boundary between what is God's and what is Caesar's. The public square, she believes, is no place for expressions of "private faith," and religion itself, in the clear-eyed tradition of freethought, is best seen as "the foundation of most other social evils."

So intense is Jacoby's animus toward all but the most unorthodox believers that it compromises whole parts of her account. It gives an almost comically defensive air to her discussion of abolitionism and the fight for civil rights, movements she admires but whose Christian inspiration she feels compelled to downplay or dismiss. And it leaves her strangely nonplussed in the face of a Catholic progressive like Monsignor John A. Ryan, an early 20th-century activist whose faith moved him both to push for ambitious social legislation and to resign from the board of the ACLU because of its support for birth control.

Jacoby is more at ease in dealing with religious conservatives, whom she eagerly consigns to the lower reaches of her secularist inferno. But here, too, there are complications that she is ill-equipped to consider. From her mocking account of Billy Graham's "celebrated" revival meetings at Madison Square Garden in 1957, for instance, one would never know that the featured speakers included Martin Luther King, Jr., who was grateful to the Southern evangelist for his emphatic public stand against segregation. King later used the jackets of Graham's books to smuggle the works of Gandhi to imprisoned freedom riders, perhaps as a jibe at their Southern jailers but certainly not (as Jacoby reports) because King knew "exactly what sort of religion was acceptable to the enemies of racial equality."

If Jacoby's fixation on the demise of freethought makes for tendentious analysis, however, it works nicely as a rhetorical strategy. It allows her to turn the tables on today's religious Right. In Jacoby's telling, it is America's secularists, not its church-going believers, who have been silenced and pushed to the margins of national debate. The anti-religious radicals on whom she shines a spotlight suffered real hardships for their principles. Thomas Paine died a bitter, broken man, abandoned by the country whose independence he had championed. Ingersoll, after a brief stint as attorney general of Illinois and a failed bid for governor, had to give up his political ambitions. Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855) was expurgated and banned, Stanton's

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heretical *Woman's Bible* (1895) disavowed by the official body of the suffrage movement. Even the relatively discreet Jefferson, Jacoby speculates, was denied a national celebration of his birthday because of his "image as a religious heretic."

A more fair-minded account of American secularism, one less intent on creating a sense of present-day crisis, would certainly include a few chapters on the injustices suffered by our most illustrious freethinkers. But it would also set out in scrupulous detail the claims of those who have resisted and—in our still overwhelmingly religious country—continue to resist secularist overreaching. It might also take note of the gradual acceptance, by even the most conservative denominations, of key secularist principles.

For Susan Jacoby, the problem with weaving such a tale is that it would have to conclude with the obvious fact of secularism's abiding strength and (fiercely contested) ascendancy. As she plainly knows, celebrating past victories is no way for a culture warrior to rally her scattered troops.

In Denial

Colossus:
The Price of
America's Empire
by Niall Ferguson
Penguin. 384 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Sean McMeekin

Since decamping from Oxford a few years ago for prestigious posts at NYU and Harvard, the Scottish historian Niall Ferguson has occupied a curious position in the public arena. In the pages of the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, he has blithely urged the U.S. to follow in Britain's imperial footsteps, knowing perfectly well that many of his readers will instinctively recoil at the idea. While not quite endorsing Kipling's notion of the "white man's burden," Ferguson employs the "E" word with gleeful abandon, trying to browbeat Americans into admitting that they, too, sit atop an empire.

Ferguson bills his new book, *Colossus*, as "primarily a work of history." But it is also, he adds, a study in "contemporary political economy," an attempt to predict the future prospects of "America's empire." At some points it reads like an economics lecture, at others like an advice book for American policymakers. Ferguson would not be Ferguson, however, without slipping frequently into the tone of cantankerous polemic. His sweeping indictments of America's "surprisingly inept" foreign policy will offend patriots and America-haters alike. The problem, in his view, is not that the United States behaves too unilaterally but rather that now, as ever, America is simply not imperial enough.

This proposition will no doubt seem counterintuitive to critics of the Iraq war. But Ferguson is not expecting the U.S. to stay very long in Mesopotamia. America's overseas interventions, he declares, have historically followed a predictable template: "impressive initial military success," followed by a "flawed assessment of indigenous sentiment" and "premature democratization," which lead in turn to a "gradual escalation of forces," creeping domestic disillusionment, and, ultimately, withdrawal.

From President McKinley in the Philippines to George W. Bush's Greater Middle East Initiative, American politicians have

Sean McMeekin *is assistant professor of international relations at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey. His first book,* The Red Millionaire, *was recently published by Yale.*

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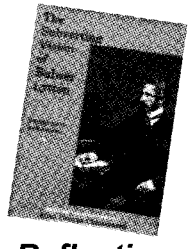

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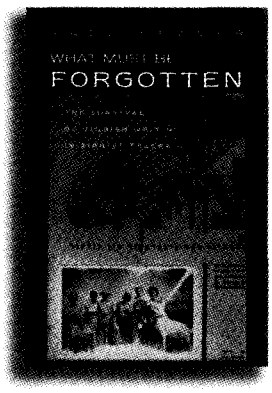

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promised to install democracy on foreign soil while professing no desire to plant a flag and rule. To Ferguson, this represents not selfless virtue but the behavior of an "empire in denial," one that refuses to take responsibility for governing. The policy of "dictating democracy" has nearly always failed, he claims, not only in Southeast Asia but also closer to home in Mexico, Haiti, and Nicaragua.

Advocates of democratization often point to postwar Japan and Germany as examples of American success. But Ferguson thinks they are the exceptions that prove the rule of imperial "attention deficit disorder." Only the demands of the cold war convinced U.S. policymakers to garrison those two countries indefinitely, in defiance of "the usual incoherent and halfhearted pattern of American intervention." More typical, Ferguson suggests, were America's cold-war failures in strategically less important places like Cuba and Vietnam.

In Ferguson's view, a kind of allpervasive "imperial denial" runs through America's political class, precluding effective foreign policy. This flaw has proved most fatal in the Middle East, where the U.S. has vacillated between imperial ventures carried out in secrecy (like the Iranian coup of 1953) and a public policy of *anti*-imperialism (as in the Suez crisis of 1956) for which America has gotten "no credit" from the Arabs. Only lately has the United States realized that terrorism sponsored by Iran, Iraq, or Syria "could be stopped only by intervention in these countries' internal affairs."

DOES THIS mean the U.S. should openly proclaim imperial intentions in the Middle East? On this question, Ferguson is a bit slippery. Americans must learn, he suggests, the virtues of "organizing hypocrisy." Citing the example of Britain's lengthy occupation of Egypt before World War II, which produced a standard of living far superior to that following Egyptian independence, Ferguson advises that there is "a great deal to be said for promising to leave—provided you do not actually mean it or do it."

What the world needs, Ferguson believes, is a true "liberal empire," on the British model. Since 1945, the U.S. has assumed many of the required functions, like providing a currency for world trade, keeping the sea lanes open, securing oil supplies, and deposing dangerous tyrants. What America still lacks, in Ferguson's view, is the will to spread liberal values. Unlike Oxford and Cambridge in Britain's glory days, America's leading universities do not produce enthusiastic settlers willing to staff an imperial bureaucracy. "There are simply not enough Americans out there," he writes, "to make nation-building work."

As with manpower, so with money. Victorian Britain exported both people and capital; the United States is now a huge importer of both. Low saving rates, high consumption, and generous entitlements have produced colossal fiscal and trade deficits that may soon "go critical." The real threat to American hegemony, Ferguson argues, does not come from international terrorism. It stems, rather, from the "$45-trillion budget black hole" in Social Security and Medicare obligations coming due when the baby-boomers retire. Only the willingness of Asian central banks to prop up the dollar and swallow U.S. government securities at unfavorable rates of return, he argues, has allowed America to run its "empire" at all.

Does this mean that the U.S. will lose out to another global hegemon? Not likely. China may be on the rise, but a run on the dollar might be more harmful to Asia than to the U.S., causing widespread failure in China's banking system. Nor is a moribund Eu-

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rope, in Ferguson's view, likely to rule over more than its own shrinking population. The most probable scenario, he avers, is less dramatic: the erosion of American power, followed by a descent into an anarchic, "apolar" world, and a new dark age.

Colossus is a bracing, original book, and Ferguson lays out his argument with flair and great erudition. He makes a strong case that America is in danger of suffering "imperial decline" from within. Far from desiring such an outcome, Ferguson thinks American hegemony is vital to the health of the world economy. But he does not think it will last unless Americans stop their spendthrift ways and commit themselves to running a real empire.

Few Americans would disagree with Ferguson about the possibility of long-term fiscal problems in the U.S. But Ferguson severely over-eggs the pudding when, like Paul Kennedy in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1987), he invokes the financial meltdown of old-regime France as a plausible analogy. The Bourbon monarchs had been paying a high-risk premium for decades before 1789, upward of 10 percent for even long-term loans. There must be some reason Asian banks have remained willing to lend the U.S. money at some 4 percent even as America's deficits have grown. It may be simply to ensure that America's borders remain open to imports. But it may also be that the global security Washington provides is a public good for which Asian governments are willing to pay.

Ferguson's snobbery also leads him to overestimate the United States' manpower deficit. He makes snide cracks about fat, lazy Americans and materialistic Ivy League graduates, entirely missing the post-9/11 rise in military enlistments. No less exaggerated is Ferguson's assessment of American overseas staying power. He passes off the occupations of Germany and Japan as exceptional, but what about NATO, or the U.S. commitment to beleaguered states like Taiwan and Israel? These relationships have endured nearly as long as Ferguson's vaunted British occupation of Egypt. Moreover, the countries invited under the American security umbrella during the cold war, from South Korea to Turkey, have emerged as prosperous market democracies—all without direct rule by Washington.

Iraq may prove a tougher nut to crack. But it is by no means clear that the problems there are best addressed by means of British-style imperialism. Ferguson makes much of the difference between the imperial wanderlust of the Oxbridge Orientalists of old and the desire of today's Americans to "give the Iraqi people democracy and go home." It is "improbable," Ferguson declares, that Americans will remain in Iraq for 40 years as the British did. Yet what exactly did the British accomplish in those 40 years, aside from securing themselves oil, periodically suppressing rebellions in brutal fashion, and having, in Ferguson's unfortunate phrase, "very good fun"? On this subject, alas, he has nothing to say. More to the point perhaps, in writing off the venture in Iraq after little more than a year, Ferguson ignores his own advice about imperial "attention deficit disorder."

No one knows exactly how to create a self-sustaining democracy with the rule of law in an Arab state where the ethos of tribe still holds sway. It is a project, as Ferguson might have conceded, of breathtaking ambition. But he cannot seem to wrap his mind around the idea that the American "empire," such as it is, operates according to principles of its own. He professes astonishment that "when the Americans say they come as liberators, not conquerors, they seem to mean it." To Ferguson, this is

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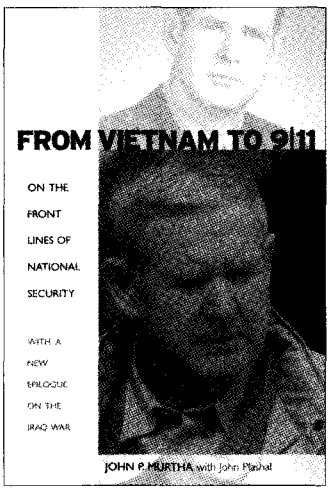
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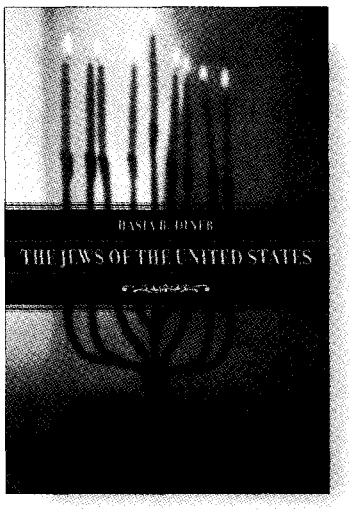

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yet further evidence that the U.S., in its failure to be British enough, wants to "dispose" prematurely of its responsibilities. To more disinterested eyes, it might be seen as an expression of the principles declared by Americans more than two centuries ago in their revolt against an overweening metropole, principles to which they have faithfully adhered and which, in a supreme act of responsibility, they have tried to share with others.

America Without Tears

Freedom Just Around the Corner: A New American History, 1585-1828
by Walter A. McDougall
HarperCollins. 638 pp. $29.95

Reviewed by
James Nuechterlein

TEXTBOOKS ASIDE, large-scale histories of the United States are not much in fashion these days. Even as assumptions about the nation's unassimilable diversity have made the very idea of writing the Great American Novel appear quaint, so also have those assumptions made it seem folly to attempt to portray adequately the protean reality of America's historical experience. Popularizers might try, the conventional wisdom would suggest, but surely scholars know better.

In the face of such widespread prejudices, it is a pleasure to report that Walter A. McDougall—a prolific historian at the University of Pennsylvania whose previous works include a detailed analysis of France's Rhineland diplomacy from 1914 to 1924, a widely acclaimed survey of American foreign relations from 1776 to the present, a Pulitzer Prize-winning history of the space age, and a history of the North Pacific from the 15th to the 20th centuries—not only has taken on the task of narrating and explaining the nation's history from its colonial origins to the present but shows every evidence of fulfilling that task brilliantly. In *Freedom Just Around the Corner*, the first of a projected three-volume enterprise, McDougall offers an analysis that is at once original, comprehensive, compulsively readable, and (to this reader at least) remarkably persuasive.

A comprehensive history is, by its very nature, impossible to summarize, but McDougall skillfully sustains a number of central themes that prevent his elegant narrative of colonial beginnings up to the eve of Andrew Jackson's presidency from degenerating into a mere catalogue recording one damn thing after another.

The most striking—and certainly most controversial—of McDougall's arguments is that America has been, from the beginning, a nation of hustlers. That term, initially jarring, becomes more persuasive as McDougall fleshes out his meaning. Americans in every period of their history, he shows, have been hustlers not simply in the negative sense of "self-promoters, scofflaws, occasional frauds, and peripatetic self-reinventers" but also in the more positive sense of "builders, doers, go-getters, dreamers, hard workers, inventors, organizers, [and] engineers."

This mixed view of Americans translates into a mixed view of their history. McDougall quotes with approval Samuel P. Huntington's summary judgment: "America is not a lie; it is a disappointment. But it can be a disappointment only because it is also a hope." Sternly undeceived, McDougall is nevertheless no cynic.

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His book is not revisionist history recapitulating a litany of American oppression, but neither can it be read as an American celebration. Better, it is a complicated celebration.

Americans, McDougall notes, "have enjoyed more opportunity to pursue their ambitions, by fair means or foul, than any other people in history." They have enjoyed unmatched freedom, and, given the mixed stuff of human nature, freedom in action can be as often corrupting as it is ennobling. As he proceeds from the colonial era through the Revolution, the making of the Constitution, the Federalist-Republican disputes of the 1790's (perhaps the most bitter in our history), the complicated diplomatic relations with England and France that finally culminated in the War of 1812, and the nationalist-sectionalist tensions of the presidencies of James Monroe and John Quincy Adams, McDougall reminds us that Americans mixed low self-interest and high ideals in ways so intricately intertwined that they cannot finally be separated.

Indeed, some of them were quite self-conscious as to what they were about: the trick they attempted to master, in McDougall's telling, was to turn humanity's corruption to creative purposes. Thus, he attributes the success of the Federalists in putting together a Constitution that would stand the test of time to precisely their lack of illusion about human nature: "They envisioned no utopias, put little trust in republican virtue, and believed the only government liable to endure was one taking mankind as it was and making allowance for passion and greed."

McDougall's narrative is similarly unsentimental throughout. On the colonial experience, he finds a degree of unity in the diverse experiences of the major English colonists—the New England Puritans, the middle-state Quakers, the Southern Cavaliers, and the Scots-Irish frontiersmen—in what he calls the "four spirits" of colonization: "the improvement ethic, the holy war against Catholics, the competition for empire, and the mission to expel or reform the uncivilized [i.e., the Indians]." Those unifying spirits, he says, remained alive through the Revolution and into the development of the new nation.

It was perhaps the second of these spirits—the religious one—that underwent the most development. "No popery" was a necessary but not sufficient dogma for British Protestants and their American successors. The various Protestant groups, whatever their doctrinal differences, all had to find a way to negotiate the tension between religious convictions and economic ambitions, to withstand prosperity's threat to faith and piety.

McDougall's discussion here is subtle and theologically well-informed, even if his conclusion is familiar to students of American religion. Americans, he says, designed a unique creed "that made the pursuit of happiness sacred, that commercialized religion and sanctified commerce, that freed people to choose whatever faith helped them feel good about doing well." That is a little too neat, but true enough in the large.

Out of all this, the colonists developed over time an encompassing civic religion that transcended the boundaries of Protestantism and even of Christianity. (McDougall has a fascinating, original, and extraordinarily suggestive discussion of the central role of Freemasonry, a kind of meta-religion, in the formation and dissemination of the American civic religion, especially among the elite.) By the time of

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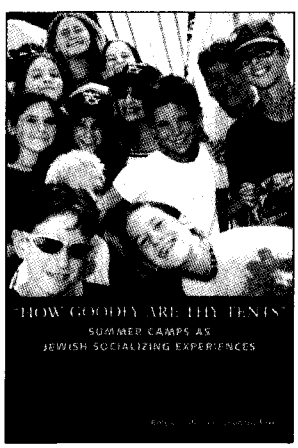

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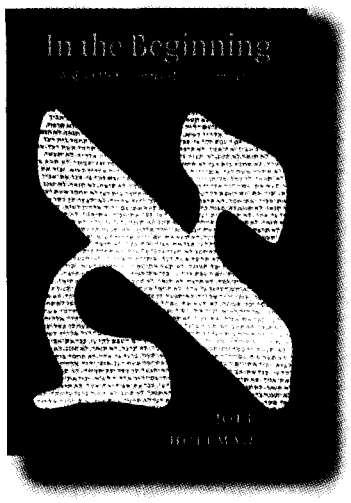

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the Revolution, he suggests, most colonists had put together a package of beliefs in self-government, religious liberty, economic opportunity, and territorial expansion that they were ready to defend in a holy war against those, in England and at home, who posed a threat to the religion that was America.

As for the post-revolutionary era, the themes of nationalism, growth, and democracy remained central to a nation thoroughly persuaded of its providential destiny. About darker aspects of the national experience—slavery being the most prominent—McDougall notes that most Americans tried as best they could, though with diminishing success, to maintain a "conspiracy of silence." That, no doubt, will be a central focus of his second volume.

IN THE meantime, we have the riches of this one, which I have only begun to suggest. McDougall is a master, for example, of the biographical sketch, and he provides dozens of deft portraits of people famous and obscure. He is never uncritical (though he clearly thinks Washington not just a great but an indispensable man) and he can be wickedly cutting (admirers of Jefferson should be forewarned). He also possesses the virtue that most historians, with their perspective of hindsight, find most difficult to sustain: a sense of contingency, of history's radical indeterminacy. He believes, and shows, that such formative American events as victory in the Revolution or the ratification of the Constitution were very close-run things, which could easily have gone the other way—and that all succeeding history, in these and endless other cases, would have been unimaginably different.

In the end, McDougall's great achievement is to have produced a book that can recommend itself to scholars and general readers alike. His 90 pages of small-print endnotes display a mastery of the massive scholarly literature, and will be a source of delight to readers absorbed by historiographical debates. At critical points in his narrative he integrates those debates into his text, but without losing the flow of the story. He also has an unusual facility for assimilating into his traditional political framework a broad range of economic and social history that expands his focus without blurring it.

But it does not take a scholar to appreciate—it may in fact be harder for a scholar to appreciate—the sheer sweep, drama, and energy of McDougall's account. He announces at the very outset that "the creation of the United States of America is the central event of the past 400 years." He is surely right about that, as he is in his claim that "America was not just born of revolution, it is one." Whatever judgments one makes about America, its is an epic tale, and it takes a masterful storyteller to do it justice.

More than narrative talent is involved. There is also, and more importantly, the matter of judgment. McDougall rightly emphasizes the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment on American thought. The central figures of that movement—Adam Smith, David Hume, Thomas Reid, Adam Ferguson, John Witherspoon—held to what was called the "common-sense philosophy." As McDougall summarizes that perspective, "A perfect society was impossible, but common sense taught that the least bad society was one that freed each person's passion for improvement and so made possible a measure of freedom and progress for all."

"The least bad society"—a society, one might say, made by hustlers. McDougall's American exceptionalism is free of moral grandiosity, and it is all the more persuasive for that. It tells the American truth unvarnished. Two more volumes at this level, and we could have the authoritative American history of our generation.

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How Foreign Aid Can Help the Poor—and Why It Doesn't

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People who think foreign aid ought to be used to help end poverty complain that it has too many strings attached. That strings are attached is true; the problem is not too many strings but rather that the wrong strings are attached to end poverty.

Most aid reflects a deal between leaders in rich, democratic countries and leaders in poor, despotic countries. Autocrats need money to keep core supporters—the military, key bureaucrats, close family members—in line, and democrats need policy concessions that help with reelection. Since few voters care much about foreign policy, these are marginal effects and so small amounts are spent on aid.

A natural opportunity exists for deals between democrats and autocrats. The latter don't need successful policies to stay in office, so they can agree to policies their citizens don't like in exchange for money to sustain them in power. Just consider Hosni Mubarak's agreement for Egypt to live in peace with Israel. In fact, autocrats like Mubarak must maintain their citizenry's dislike for policy concessions they grant. If the policy could be enforced without aid, there would be no reason to continue to pay. Democratic leaders cannot easily buy incumbency; they must deliver policies their constituents like. Thus, the main string attached to foreign aid deals is money for policy. That is a winning situation for leaders in donor and recipient countries and is pretty good for donor citizens too. But it is bad for ordinary citizens in the recipient country. Their welfare is sold for aid.

No wonder aid does little to raise incomes, improve health or education, or do the myriad other things well-intentioned people would like aid to do. How might these problems be corrected? There are four steps to changing aid into a means to help the poor:

1. Encourage individuals and groups to give aid through NGOs or directly to needy recipients, rather than by and to government. Shifting aid outside government reduces the danger of government deals that do not alleviate poverty. (Currently the United States contributes about $56 per American citizen in global aid. Total assistance could easily be maintained if wealthier families contributed twice that, deducting it from their taxes as charitable giving.)
2. Require aid recipients to open their books to independent, external audit.
3. Broadcast audit results in easily digested form.
4. When aid must be given to governments, give to those that have at least two organized, freely operating political parties or other political groups that articulate views different from those of their government, and be sure that these groups have an unencumbered right to compete against the incumbent leader for office.

Until poverty-alleviating aid is moved out of the government's domain and into the hands of caring citizens, and **until government aid is constrained to go as directly as possible to those who need the money the most, aid will continue to serve as a means to achieve policy goals (a good thing), to prolong despotism (a bad thing), and to lead recipients to engage in policies that are against the interests of their own citizens (a very bad thing).**

—Bruce Bueno de Mesquita

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Silver Professor of Politics at New York University.

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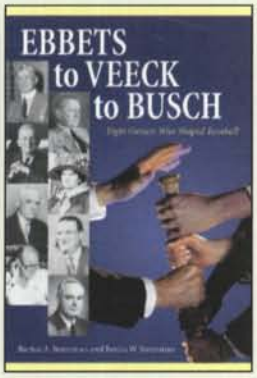

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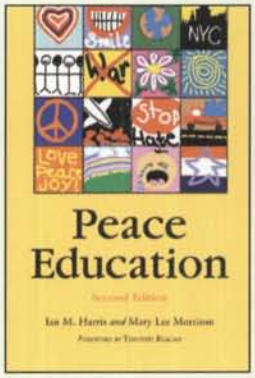

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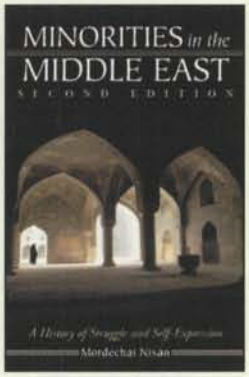

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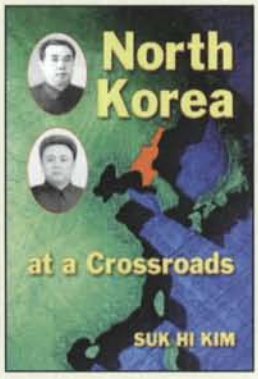

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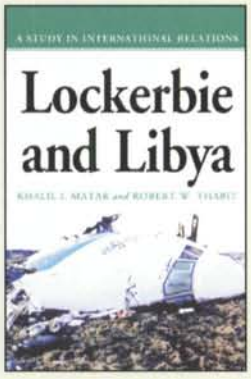

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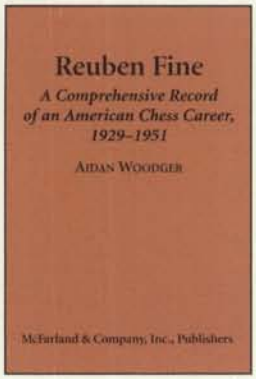
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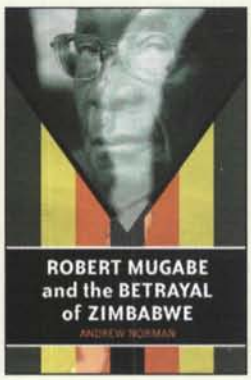

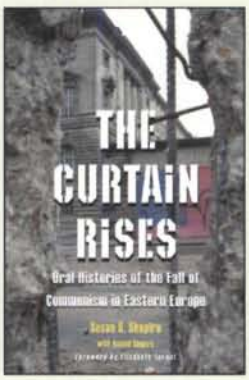

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